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THE

WORKS

OF

Mr. *WILLIAM CONGREVE.*

IN THREE VOLUMES.

CONSISTING OF

His PLAYS and POEMS.

BIRMINGHAM,
Printed by JOHN BASKERVILLE;
For J. and R. TONSON, in the *Strand, London.*
MDCCLXI.

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THE

WORKS

OF

Mr. *WILLIAM CONGREVE.*

VOLUME THE FIRST.

CONTAINING,

The OLD BATCHELOR, *a Comedy.*

The DOUBLE DEALER, *a Comedy.*

BIRMINGHAM,
Printed by JOHN BASKERVILLE;
For J. and R. TONSON, in the *Strand, London.*
MDCCLXI.

17745

PREFACE.

THERE is no Occaſion to ſay any Thing in Relation to theſe Plays, which ſome Time ſince have been every Way made public: And conſequently, are already placed in that Degree of Reputation, (whatever it be) which their Auditors and Readers have thought fit to allow them.

This Edition of them, therefore, is only recommended as the leaſt faulty Impreſſion, which has yet been printed; in which, Care has been taken both to Reviſe the Preſs, and to Review and Correct many Paſſages in the Writing.

Not-

Notwithſtanding which Care, it muſt be confeſſed, too many *Errata* in both Kinds ſtill remain; thoſe of the Preſs, are to be reckoned amongſt Things which no Diligence can prevent. Mr. *Bayle,* in his Preface to the firſt Edition of his Dictionary, ſpeaks of the Vexation of ineffectual Superviſing the Preſs, in Terms ſo feeling, that they move Compaſſion in his Reader; and concludes the Paragraph touching it, in theſe Words, "*Je l'oublie autant que Je puis, animus* "*meminiſſe horret.*"

The Tragedy of the *Mourning Bride,* in this Edition, is reformed in its *Numbers,* and by ſeveral little Variations and Tranſpoſitions in the Expreſſion, entirely caſt into Blank Verſe; in Reſpect of which Meaſure, it was before, in many Places, defective. Some few Verſes are alſo, in one or two

two Places, inſerted, or ſubſtituted in the Room of others, it is hoped for the better.

It will hardly be denied, that it is both a Reſpect due to the Public, and a Right which every Man owes to himſelf, to endeavour that what he has written, may not appear with any Faults which he is capable of avoiding. This Conſideration alone, were ſufficient to have occaſioned this Edition; but it has been haſtened by another Motive, which is, that theſe five Plays have lately undergone a ſpurious Impreſſion, and have been very faultily, as well as very indirectly publiſhed, in Prejudice both to the Author, and the Bookſeller who has the Property of the Copy.

In the Third Volume there is an Opera, which has never yet appeared; of which, there is little to be ſaid

in

in this Place, but that the Muſic to it is excellently well compoſed, by Mr. *John Eccles*.

The Miſcellaneous Verſes, which conclude this Work, are of ſeveral Kinds, and written occaſionally at diſtant Times; the early Date of ſome, no Doubt, will plainly appear, and it is hoped will alſo plead their Excuſe. Part of them has heretofore been printed ſingly, or diſperſed in Miſcellanies.

THE

OLD BATCHELOR.

A

COMEDY.

Quem tulit ad Scenam ventoſo gloria Curru,
Exanimat lentus Spectator; ſedulus inflat.
Sic leve, ſic parvum eſt, animum quod laudis avarum
Subruit, aut reficit——

Hor. Ep. 1. Lib. 2.

Printed in the YEAR MDCCLXI.

To the Right Honorable

CHARLES,

Lord *CLIFFORD,*

OF

LANESBOROUGH, &c.

My LORD,

IT is with a great Deal of Pleaſure, that I lay hold on this firſt Occaſion, which the Accidents of my Life have given me, of writing to your Lordſhip: For ſince at the ſame Time, I write to all the World, it will be a Means of publiſhing (what I would have every Body know) the Reſpect and Duty which I owe and pay to you. I have ſo much Inclination to be yours, that I need no other Engagement: But the particular Ties, by which I am bound to your Lordſhip and Family, have put it out of my Power to make you any Compliment; ſince all Offers of myſelf, will amount to no more than an honeſt Acknowledgment, and only ſhow a Willingneſs in me to be grateful.

I am very near wiſhing, That it were not ſo much my Intereſt to be your Lordſhip's Servant, that it might be more my Merit; not that I would avoid being obliged to you, but I would have my own Choice to run me into the Debt; that I might have it to boaſt, I had diſtinguiſhed a Man, to whom I would be glad to be obliged, even without the Hopes of having it in my Power ever to make him a Return.

It is impoſſible for me to come near your Lordſhip, in any Kind, and not to receive ſome Favor; and while in Appearance I am only making an Acknowledgment (with the uſual underhand Dealing of the World) I am at the ſame Time inſinuating my own Intereſt. I cannot give your Lordſhip your Due, without tacking a Bill of my own Privileges. 'Tis true, if a Man never committed a Folly, he would never ſtand in Need of a Protection: But then Power would have Nothing to do, and good Nature no Occaſion to ſhow itſelf; and where thoſe Qualities are, 'tis Pity they ſhould want Objects to ſhine upon. I muſt confeſs this is no Reaſon, why a Man ſhould do an idle Thing, nor indeed any good Excuſe for it, when done; yet it reconciles the Uſes of ſuch Authority and Goodneſs,

to

to the Neceſſities of our Follies; and is a Sort of poetical Logic, which, at this Time, I would make Uſe of, to argue your Lordſhip into a Protection of this Play. It is the firſt Offence I have committed in this Kind, or indeed, in any Kind of Poetry, tho' not the firſt made public; and, therefore, I hope will the more eaſily be pardoned: But had it been acted when it was firſt written, more might have been ſaid in its Behalf; Ignorance of the Town and Stage, would then have been Excuſes in a young Writer, which now, almoſt four Years Experience will ſcarce allow of. Yet I muſt declare myſelf ſenſible of the good Nature of the Town, in receiving this Play ſo kindly, with all its Faults, which I muſt own were, for the moſt Part, very induſtriouſly covered by the Care of the Players; for, I think, ſcarce a Character but received all the Advantage it would admit of, from the Juſtneſs of the Action.

As for the Critics, my Lord, I have Nothing to ſay, to, or againſt, any of them of any Kind; from thoſe who make juſt Exceptions, to thoſe who find Fault in the wrong Place. I will only make this general Anſwer in Behalf of my Play (an Anſwer, which *Epictetus* adviſes every Man

to make for himſelf, to his Cenſurers) viz. *That if they who find ſome Faults in it, were as intimate with it as I am, they would find a great many more.* This is a Confeſſion, which I needed not to have made; but however, I can draw this Uſe from it, to my own Advantage, that I think there are no Faults in it, but what I do know; which, as I take it, is the firſt Step to an Amendment.

Thus I may live in Hopes (ſome Time or other) of making the Town Amends; but you, my Lord, I never can, tho' I am ever

Your LORDSHIP'S

Moſt Obedient and

Moſt humble Servant,

WILLIAM CONGREVE.

TO

Mr. *CONGREVE.*

WHEN *Virtue in Purſuit of Fame appears,*
And forward ſhoots the Growth beyond the Years,
We timely court the riſing Hero's Cauſe;
And on his Side, the Poet wiſely draws;
Beſpeaking him hereafter, by Applauſe.
The Days will come, when we ſhall all receive
Returning Int'reſt, from what now we give:
Inſtructed and ſupported by that Praiſe
And Reputation, which we ſtrive to raiſe.
Nature ſo coy, ſo hardly to be woo'd,
Flies, like a Miſtreſs, but to be purſu'd.
O Congreve! *boldly follow on the Chaſe;*
She looks behind, and wants thy ſtrong Embrace:
She yields, ſhe yields, ſurrenders all her Charms,
Do you but force her gently to your Arms:
Such Nerves, ſuch Graces, in your Lines appear,
As you were made to be her Raviſher.
Dryden *has long extended his Command,*
By Right Divine, quite through the Muſes Land,

To Mr. *CONGREVE.*

Abſolute Lord; and holding now from none,
But great Apollo, *his undoubted Crown,*
(That Empire ſettled, and grown old in Pow'r)
Can wiſh for Nothing, but a Succeſſor:
Not to enlarge his Limits, but maintain
Thoſe Provinces, which he alone could gain.
His eldeſt Wycherley, *in wiſe Retreat,*
Thought it not worth his Quiet to be Great.
Looſe, wand'ring Etherege, *in wild Pleaſures toſt,*
In foreign Int'reſts, to his Hopes long loſt:
Poor Lee *and* Otway *dead!* Congreve *appears,*
The Darling, and laſt Comfort of his Years:
May'ſt thou live long in thy great Maſter's Smiles,
And growing under him, adorn theſe Iſles:
But when—when Part of him (be that but late)
His Body yielding muſt ſubmit to Fate,
Leaving his deathleſs Works and Thee behind,
(The natural Succeſſor of his Mind)
Then may'ſt thou finiſh what he has begun:
Heir to his Merit, be in Fame his Son.
What thou haſt done, ſhows all is in thy Pow'r;
And to write better, only muſt write more.
'Tis Something to be willing to commend;
But my beſt Praiſe, is, that I am your Friend.

THO. SOUTHERNE.

TO
Mr. *CONGREVE.*

THE Danger's great in theſe cenſorious Days,
When Critics are ſo riſe, to venture Praiſe:
When the infectious and ill-natur'd Brood
Behold, and damn the Work, becauſe 'tis good;
And with a proud, ungenerous Spirit, try
To paſs an Oſtraciſm on Poetry.
But you, my Friend, your Worth does ſafely bear
Above their Spleen; you have no Cauſe for Fear;
Like a well-mettled Hawk, you took your Flight
Quite out of Reach, and almoſt out of Sight.
As the ſtrong Sun, in a fair Summer's Day,
You riſe, and drive the Miſts and Clouds away,
The Owls and Bats, and all the Birds of Prey.
Each Line of yours, like poliſh'd Steel's ſo hard,
In Beauty ſafe, it wants no other Guard.
Nature herſelf's beholden to your Dreſs,
Which, tho' ſtill like, much fairer you expreſs.
Some vainly ſtriving Honor to obtain,
Leave to their Heirs the Traffic of their Brain,

Like

To Mr. *CONGREVE.*

Like China *under Ground, the ripening Ware,*
In a long Time, perhaps grows worth our Care:
But you now reap the Fame, ſo well you've ſown;
The Planter taſtes his Fruit to Ripeneſs grown.
As a fair Orange-Tree at once is ſeen,
Big with what's ripe, yet ſpringing ſtill with green;
So at one Time, my worthy Friend appears,
With all the Sap of Youth, and Weight of Years.
Accept my pious Love, as forward Zeal,
Which, tho' it ruins me, I can't conceal:
Expos'd to Cenſure for my weak Applauſe,
I'm pleas'd to ſuffer in ſo juſt a Cauſe:
And tho' my Offering may unworthy prove,
Take, as a Friend, the Wiſhes of my Love.

J. MARSH.

To Mr. *CONGREVE,* on his Play called THE OLD BATCHELOR.

WIT, *like true Gold, refin'd from all Allay,*
Immortal is, and never can decay:

'Tis

To Mr. *CONGREVE.*

'Tis in all Times and Languages the ſame;
Nor can an ill Tranſlation quench the Flame:
For, tho' the Form and Faſhion don't remain,
Th' intrinſic Value ſtill it will retain.
Then let each ſtudied Scene be writ with Art;
And Judgment ſweat to form the labor'd Part;
Each Character be juſt, and Nature ſeem;
Without th' Ingredient, Wit, 'tis all but Phlegm:
For that's the Soul, which all the Maſs muſt move,
And wake our Paſſions into Grief, or Love.
But you, too bounteous, ſow your Wit ſo thick,
We are ſurpris'd, and know not where to pick:
And while with Clapping, we are juſt to you,
Ourſelves we injure, and loſe Something new.
What mayn't we then, great Youth, of thee preſage,
Whoſe Art and Wit ſo much tranſcend thy Age?
How wilt thou ſhine at thy Meridian Height?
Who, at thy Riſing, giv'ſt ſo vaſt a Light.
When Dryden *dying, ſhall the World deceive,*
Whom we immortal, as his Works, believe;
Thou ſhalt ſucceed, the Glory of the Stage,
Adorn and entertain the coming Age.

BEVIL HIGGONS.

PROLOGUE

Intended for

The OLD BATCHELOR.

Written by the Lord FALKLAND.

MOST Authors on the Stage at first appear
Like Widows Bridegrooms, full of Doubt and Fear:
They judge, from the Experience of the Dame,
How hard a Task it is to quench her Flame:
And who falls short of furnishing a Course,
Up to his brawny Predecessor's Force;
With utmost Rage from her Embraces thrown,
Remains convicted, as an empty Drone.
Thus often, to his Shame, a pert Beginner
Proves in the End a miserable Sinner.

As for our Youngster, I am apt to doubt him,
With all the Vigor of his Youth about him:
But he, more sanguine, trusts in one and twenty,
And impudently hopes he shall content you:

For

PROLOGUE.

For tho' his Batchelor be worn and cold,
He thinks the Young may club to help the Old:
And what alone can be achiev'd by neither,
Is often brought about by both together.
The briſkeſt of you all have felt Alarms,
Finding the Fair One proſtitute her Charms,
With broken Sighs, in her old Fumbler's Arms.
But for our Spark, he ſwears he'll ne'er be jealous
Of any Rivals, but young luſty Fellows.
Faith, let him try his Chance; and if the Slave,
After his Bragging, prove a waſhy Knave,
May he be baniſh'd to ſome lonely Den,
And never more have Leave to dip his Pen:
But if he be the Champion he pretends,
Both Sexes ſure will join to be his Friends;
For all agree, where all can have their Ends.
And you muſt own him for a Man of Might,
If he holds out to pleaſe you the third Night.

PRO-

PROLOGUE.

Spoken by Mrs. BRACEGIRDLE.

HOW this vile World is chang'd! In former Days,
Prologues were ſerious Speeches before Plays;
Grave ſolemn Things, as Graces are to Feaſts;
Where Poets begg'd a Bleſſing from their Gueſts.
But now, no more like Suppliants we come;
A Play makes War, and Prologue is the Drum:
Arm'd with keen Satire, and with pointed Wit,
We threaten you who do for Judges ſit,
To ſave our Plays, or elſe we'll damn your Pit.
But for your Comfort, it falls out to Day,
We've a young Author, and his firſt-born Play;
So, ſtanding only on his good Behaviour,
He's very civil, and intreats your Favor.
Not but the Man has Malice, would he ſhow it,
But on my Conſcience he's a baſhful Poet;
You think that ſtrange — no Matter, he'll outgrow it.

Well,

PROLOGUE.

Well, I'm his Advocate—by me he prays you,
(I don't know whether I ſhall ſpeak to pleaſe you)
He prays—O bleſs me! what ſhall I do now!
Hang me if I know what he prays, or how!
And 'twas the prettieſt Prologue as he wrote it!
Well, the Deuce take me, if I han't forgot it.
O Lord, for Heav'n's Sake excuſe the Play,
Becauſe, you know, if it be damn'd to Day,
I ſhall be hang'd for wanting what to ſay.
For my Sake then—but I'm in ſuch Confuſion,
I cannot ſtay to hear your Reſolution.

[Runs off.

Dramatis

Dramatis Perſonæ.

MEN.

Heartwell, a ſurly old Batchelor, pretending to ſlight Women, ſecretly in Love with *Sylvia.*	Mr. *Betterton.*
Bellmour, in Love with *Belinda.*	Mr. *Powel.*
Vainlove, capricious in his Love; in Love with *Araminta.*	Mr. *Williams.*
Sharper.	Mr. *Verbruggen.*
Sir *Joſeph Wittol.*	Mr. *Bowen.*
Captain *Bluffe.*	Mr. *Haines.*
Fondlewife, a Banker.	Mr. *Dogget.*
Setter, a Pimp.	Mr. *Underhill.*
Servant to *Fondlewife.*	

WOMEN.

Araminta, in Love with *Vainlove.*	Mrs. *Bracegirdle.*
Belinda, her Couſin, an affected Lady, in Love with *Bellmour.*	Mrs. *Mountfort.*
Lætitia, Wife to *Fondlewife.*	Mrs. *Barry.*
Sylvia, Vainlove's forſaken Miſtreſs.	Mrs. *Bowman.*
Lucy, her Maid.	Mrs. *Leigh.*
Betty.	
Boy and Footmen.	

SCENE, *LONDON.*

THE

THE LIFE OF CONGREVE.

WILLIAM CONGREVE, the only surviving Son of *William Congreve,* who was second Son of *Richard Congreve,* Esq; of *Congreve* and *Stratton* in the County of *Stafford.* As to the Place, and indeed as to the Kingdom, in which he was born, Authors greatly differ; some are of Opinion that he was a Native of *Ireland;* but it is morally certain, that he was born in *England,* at the Village of *Bardsa,* near *Leeds* in *Yorkshire,* which was the Estate of a near Relation of his by the Mother's Side. The Time when it hap-

pened can only be collected by Circumſtances, which place it in 1671 or 1672. His Father carried him, when a Child, into *Ireland,* where, at that Time, he had a Command in the Army, but was afterwards entruſted with the Management of a conſiderable Part of the large Eſtate of the noble Family of *Burlington;* which fixed the Reſidence of himſelf and Family in that Kingdom.

Our Author received the firſt Tincture of Letters in the great School of *Kilkenny,* and from thence went to the Univerſity of *Dublin;* where, in a ſhort Time, he became perfectly acquainted with all the Branches of polite Literature, and acquired not only a general Acquaintance with, but a correct and critical Taſte in, the Claſſics. His Father, however, was very deſirous that his Parts ſhould be applied to more profitable Studies; and therefore ſent him over to *England* ſoon after the Revolution, and entered him as a Student in the *Middle-Temple.* But the ſevere Study of the Law had

had ſo little Relation to his active Diſpoſition and ſprightly Humor, that though he continued to live in Chambers for three or four Years, yet it does not appear that he ever applied himſelf with Diligence to conquer his Diſlike to a Courſe of Life, which had been choſen for him, with ſo little Reſpect either to the Turn of his natural Parts, or the preceding Courſe of his Education. But how little ſoever he anſwered the Expectation of his Friends, in the Proſecution of that Profeſſion to which they had deſtined him, he was not either indolent or inactive in the Cultivation of thoſe Studies that were both his early and lateſt Care.

About three Years after his Return to *England,* during a ſlow Recovery from a Fit of Sickneſs, he amuſed himſelf in writing a Comedy, which he very ſoon finiſhed; and though he was very modeſt and diffident of his own Abilities, yet he ſuffered himſelf to be overcome by the Perſuaſion of his Friends, and conſented to bring it

on the Stage. In Order to this, he was recommended to Mr. *Southerne,* who, in Conjunction with *Dryden,* and *Arthur Manwairing,* reviſed the *Old Batchelor;* of which *Dryden* ſaid, He never ſaw ſuch a firſt Play, and that the Author not being acquainted with the Stage or the Town, it would be pity to have it miſcarry for Want of a little Aſſiſtance. Mr. *Thomas Davenant,* who had then the Direction of the Theatre Royal in *Drury-Lane,* was ſo much ſtruck with the Merit of the Piece, and the Author's Converſation, that he granted him what is called the Privilege of the Houſe, half a Year before his Play came upon the Stage; which was not only an unuſual, but an unprecedented Favor.

The Old Batchelor was acted before a numerous and noble Audience, and was admirably well performed, and received with ſuch general Applauſe, that Mr. *Congreve* was thenceforward conſidered as the Prop of the declining Stage, and as the riſing Genius in Dramatic Poeſy. It was this

Play

Play that brought our Author acquainted with that great Patron of Learning, *Charles Montague,* Lord *Halifax;* who being deſirous to place ſo eminent a Wit in a State of Eaſe and Tranquillity, made him immediately one of the Commiſſioners for licenſing Hackney-Coaches; beſtowed upon him ſoon after a Place in the Pipe-Office; and likewiſe a Place in the Cuſtom-Houſe, of the Value of ſix Hundred Pounds a Year.

We need not be ſurpriſed, that after ſuch Encouragement as the Town, and even the Critics, had given him, our Author quickly made his Appearance again upon the Stage; as he did the Year following, when he brought on the *Double Dealer.* This Play was honored with the Preſence of Queen *Mary,* and was very highly commended, as well as generally approved, by the beſt Judges: And if it was not ſo univerſally applauded as his former Performance, we need not wonder at it; for regular Comedy was at that Time a new Thing, our Author being the very firſt who

attempted it; I will not ſay he was the laſt who ſucceeded in it; but I may ſafely aſſert, that he carried it to the higheſt Degree of Perfection; and amongſt all his Plays, there is not one that does him greater Credit than the *Double Dealer*, notwithſtanding ſome Objections that were made to it. It was towards the Cloſe of that Year, Queen *Mary* died, upon which Occaſion he wrote a Paſtoral, which, in Point of Simplicity, Elegance, and Correctneſs, is at leaſt equal to any Thing of that Kind that has appeared in our Language.

In 1695, when *Betterton* opened his new Theatre in *Portugal-Row, Lincoln's-Inn Fields*, Mr. *Congreve* ſtrongly eſpouſed his Cauſe, and gave him his excellent Comedy of *Love for Love;* ſo judiciouſly contrived, and ſo happily executed, as to unite at once the Approbation of the Few, and the tumultuous Applauſe of the Many, in its Favor. The ſame Year he diſtinguiſhed himſelf in a new Kind of Poetry, by addreſſing to King *William* an irregular Ode on the taking

ing of *Namure;* in which the Sublimity of the Sentiments, the Harmony of the Numbers, and the graceful Turn of his Panegyric, are truly admirable. As he had now attained the higheſt Reputation as a Comic Poet, he was inclined to ſhow, that a regular and finiſhed Tragedy might ſucceed upon the *Engliſh* Theatre; and it ſeems to have coſt him more Pains than any of his former Plays, for it was not till 1697 that the *Mourning Bride* was acted at the new Theatre in *Lincoln's-Inn Fields*. Very few Plays ever excited ſo great Expectations as this; fewer ſtill have met, after ſuch Expectation raiſed, with ſo univerſal an Approbation. In ſhort, it was the beſt received of all his Pieces; and without Doubt, whatever Credit he drew from this Tragedy, was in ſome Meaſure ſhared by the Audience, who fairly entitled themſelves to the Character of equal and able Judges, by the Applauſe they beſtowed upon that excellent Performance.

He afterwards brought on another Comedy, the laſt, though not the leaſt valu-

able, of his Performances: It was called *The Way of the World,* of which it was ſo juſt a Picture, that the World could not bear it; which gave our Author a Diſguſt to the Theatre: Upon which Mr. *Dennis* ſaid a very fine and a very kind Thing, *That Mr.* Congreve *quitted the Stage early, and that Comedy left it with him.* He ſeems to have foreſeen the Fate of this Play, which is will revenged in his Epilogue, as it is juſtly expoſed in the Dedication prefixed to it, wherein our Author ſhowed, that he well knew how to reſent the Injuries done him by little Critics. But this Play has long ago triumphed over its feeble Adverſaries, and is now juſtly eſteemed as it deſerves.

He amuſed himſelf, however, after this, and obliged the World by a great Variety of Original Poems and Tranſlations. He had a fine Taſte for Muſic, as well as Poetry; which ſufficiently appears in his *Hymn to Harmony in Honor of St. Cecilia's Day,* ſet by Mr. *John Eccles,* one of the moſt elegant Compoſers our Nation has produced. To him alſo

alſo our Author was obliged for ſetting ſeveral of his Songs, which are very beautiful in their Kind, and have all that Vivacity of Wit which can give Life and Luſtre to ſuch Performances. His Tranſlations have done him the greateſt Honor, in the Sentiments of thoſe who were the beſt Judges, and who have taken Pains to compare them with the Originals. The *Hymn to Venus,* and ſome of the moſt moving Paſſages in the *Iliad,* appear with all the Spirit and Dignity of *Homer:* And as it is impoſſible for a learned Reader to peruſe them, without confeſſing his Accuracy; ſo whoever has a true Taſte for Poetry, muſt feel the Effects of that Art and Force, with which all the Emotions, naturally riſing from the Paſſions of the Human Mind, are expreſſed in theſe nervous Pieces. His Imitations of *Horace* have as much the Air of that Poet as our Times or Language will permit; that is, the ſame Strength, Vivacity and Delicacy, for which they have been ſo long admired in the Original. The

Third

Third Book of *Ovid's Art of Love,* appears in our Tongue with all the Sweetneſs and Softneſs peculiar to that Author, who was perfectly acquainted with the Paſſion, and knew how to deſcribe it with all the maſterly Graces of a great Poet; and what was admired in the *Auguſtan* Age, becomes excellent in ours, from the happy Union of the moſt diſtant Excellencies in a Tranſlator, Eaſe and Exactneſs. He was the better qualified for an Undertaking of this Kind, from the natural Turn of his own Temper, for his Poem to, and Epigram on, Mrs. *Arabella Hunt,* are entirely in the *Ovidian* Strain, and are as pleaſingly pathetic as any Poems in their Kind, in our own or perhaps in any other Language.

There is a Strength and Solemnity in his Verſes to the Memory of Lady *Gethin,* and in his Epitaph on the two *Huntingtons,* that makes one ſcarce conceive it poſſible that he ſhould ſucceed as well in lighter Compoſitions; and yet the Tales that he has told after *Fontaine,* are ſo unaffected and natural,

natural, that, if we were not appriſed of it, we ſhould never have ſuſpected they were Tranſlations. But there is one Piece of his which ought to be particularly diſtinguiſhed, as being ſo truly an Original, that though it ſeems to be written with the utmoſt Facility, yet we may deſpair of ever ſeeing it copied: This is his *Doris,* ſo highly and ſo juſtly commended by Sir *Richard Steele,* as the ſharpeſt and moſt delicate Satire he had ever met with.

His two Pieces of the Dramatic Kind, do him equal Honor as a Poet and as a Lover of Muſic, *viz. The Judgment of Paris,* a Maſque, and *The Opera of Semele.* Of theſe, the former was acted with great Applauſe, and the latter finely ſet to Muſic by Mr. *Eccles.* In Reſpect to both, it is but Juſtice to ſay, that they have the ſame Stamp of Excellency with the Reſt of his Writings, were conſidered as Maſter-pieces when publiſhed, and may ſerve as Models to Poſterity.

His *Eſſay upon Humor in* Engliſh *Comedy,* is, without Doubt, as inſtructive, as entertaining,

taining, and as correct a Piece of Criticism, as is any where to be met with: It is therefore inserted at the End of the third Volume, having never before been printed in any Edition of his Works.

It has been observed, that no Change of Ministries affected him in the least, nor was he ever removed from any Post that was given him, except to a better. His Place in the Custom-House, and his Office of Secretary in *Jamaica*, are said to have brought him in upwards of twelve Hundred Pounds a Year; and though he lived in a Manner suitable to such a Fortune, yet he was so far an Oeconomist, as to raise from thence a competent Estate. No Man of his Parts and Learning ever passed through Life with more Ease, or less Envy; and as in the Dawn of his Reputation, he was very dear to the greatest Wits of his Time; so during his whole Life, he preserved the utmost Respect, and received continual Marks of Esteem, from Men of Genius and Letters, without ever being involved in any

of

of their Quarrels, or drawing upon himſelf the leaſt Mark of Diſtaſte, or even Diſſatisfaction: On the contrary, they ſought his Approbation with Concern, and received it as the higheſt Sanction of Merit. *Addiſon* teſtified his perſonal Regard for him, and his high Eſteem for his Writings, upon many Occaſions: Mr. *Pope* likewiſe honored him with the higheſt Teſtimony of Deference and Eſteem, and in his Poſtſcript to his Tranſlation of *Homer* thus ſpeaks of him: "Inſtead of endeavouring to raiſe a "vain Monument to myſelf, let me leave "behind me a Memorial of my Friendſhip, "with one of the moſt valuable Men, as "well as fineſt Writers, of my Age and "Country: One who has tried, and knows "by his own Experience, how hard an Un-"dertaking it is to do Juſtice to *Homer;* "and one who (I am ſure) ſincerely re-"joices with me at the Period of my La-"bors. To him therefore, having brought "this long Work to a Concluſion, I deſire "to dedicate it, and to have the Honor

"and

" and Satisfaction of placing together, in " this Manner, the Names of Mr. *Congreve,* " and of *A. Pope.*"

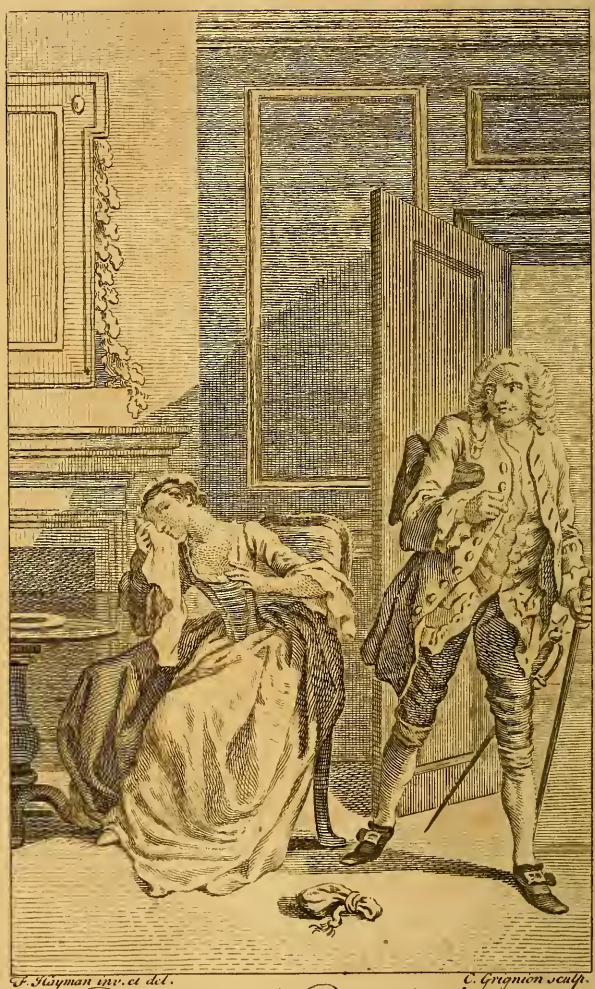
The beſt Part of the laſt twenty Years of his Life, were ſpent in Eaſe and Retirement; but towards the End of his Days, he was very much afflicted with the Gout, which at length broke his Conſtitution ſo much, as to bring on a gradual Decay. It was for this, that in the Summer of the Year 1728, he made a Tour to *Bath,* for the Benefit of the Waters, where he had the Misfortune to be overturned in his Chariot; from which Time he complained of a Pain in his Side, which was ſuppoſed to ariſe from ſome inward Bruiſe. However it was, upon his Return to *London,* his Health declined more and more, but without making any Impreſſion on his Spirits or Underſtanding. He had accuſtomed himſelf to conſider Life, and every Thing belonging to it, as Bleſſings in which we have a very uncertain Tenure; and therefore was neither ſurpriſed or diſturbed at the Proſpect

Proſpect of loſing it. He yielded his laſt Breath on *Sunday* Morning, *January* 19th, 1728, at his Houſe in *Surry-Street* in the *Strand*, in the 57th Year of his Age; and on the *Sunday* following, his Corpſe lay in State in the *Jeruſalem* Chamber, from whence, the ſame Evening, between the Hours of Nine and Ten, it was carried with great Decency and Solemnity into King *Henry* the Seventh's Chapel, and after the Funeral Service was performed, was interred in the Abbey. The Pall was ſupported by the Duke of *Bridgwater*, Earl of *Godolphin*, Lord *Cobham*, Lord *Wilmington*, the Honorable *George Berkley*, Eſq; and Brigadier General *Churchill*; and ſome Time after a neat and elegant Monument was erected to his Memory, with the following Inſcription thereon.

Mr. William Congreve *died* Jan. 19th, 1728, *aged Fifty Six, and was buried near this Place; to whoſe moſt valuable Memory this Monument is ſet up, by* Henrietta *Dutcheſs of* Marlborough, *as a Mark how dearly ſhe remembers*

members the Happineſs and Honor ſhe enjoyed in the ſincere Friendſhip of ſo worthy and honeſt a Man, whoſe Virtue, Candor and Wit, gained him the Love and Eſteem of the preſent Age, and whoſe Writings will be the Admiration of the future.

THE



F. Hayman inv. et del. C. Grignion sculp.

The Old Bachelor.

THE OLD BATCHELOR.

ACT I. SCENE I.

SCENE, *The Street.*

BELLMOUR *and* VAINLOVE *meeting.*

BELLMOUR.

VAINLOVE, and abroad ſo early! good Morrow; I thought a Contemplative Lover could no more have parted with his Bed in a Morning, than he could have ſlept in't.

VAINLOVE.

Bellmour, good Morrow—Why Truth on't is, theſe early Sallies are not uſual to me; but Buſineſs, as you ſee, Sir—— [*Shewing Letters.*] And Buſineſs muſt be follow'd, or be loſt.

BELLMOUR.

Buſineſs!——And ſo muſt Time, my Friend, be cloſe purſued, or loſt. Buſineſs is the Rub of Life, perverts our Aim, caſts off the Bias, and leaves us wide and ſhort of the intended Mark.

VAINLOVE.

Pleaſure, I gueſs you mean.

BELLMOUR.

Ay, what elſe has Meaning?

VAINLOVE.

Oh the Wife will tell you——

BELLMOUR.

More than they believe——Or underſtand.

VAINLOVE.

How, how, *Ned,* a wiſe Man ſay more than he underſtands?

BELLMOUR.

Ay, ay, Wiſdom's nothing but a pretending to know and believe more than we really do. You read of but one wiſe Man, and all that he knew was, that he knew Nothing. Come, come, leave Buſineſs to Idlers, and Wiſdom to Fools; they have need of 'em: Wit, be my Faculty, and Pleaſure, my Occupation; and let Father Time ſhake his Glaſs. Let low and earthly Souls grovel 'till they have work'd them-

themſelves ſix Foot deep into a Grave—— Buſineſs is not my Element——I roll in a higher Orb, and dwell——

VAINLOVE.

In Caſtles i'th' Air, of thy own building: That's thy Element, *Ned*—Well, as high a Flyer as you are, I have a Lure may make you ſtoop. [*Flings a Letter.*

BELLMOUR.

I marry, Sir, I have a Hawk's Eye at a Woman's Hand—There's more Elegancy in the falſe Spelling of this Superſcription [*Takes up the Letter.*] than in all *Cicero*—Let me ſee——How now! *Dear perfidious* Vainlove. [*Reads.*

VAINLOVE.

Hold, hold, 'ſlife that's the wrong.

BELLMOUR.

Nay let's ſee the Name *(Sylvia!)* how canſt thou be ungrateful to that Creature? She's extremely pretty, and loves thee entirely——I have heard her breathe ſuch Raptures about thee——

VAINLOVE.

Ay, or any Body that ſhe's about——

BELLMOUR.

No, faith *Frank* you wrong her; ſhe has been juſt to you.

VAINLOVE.

That's pleaſant, by my Troth, from thee, who haſt had her.

BELLMOUR.

Never——her Affections: 'Tis true by Heav'n, ſhe own'd it to my Face; and bluſhing like the Virgin Morn when it diſclos'd the Cheat, which, that truſty Bawd of Nature, Night, had hid, confeſs'd her Soul was true to you; tho' I by Treachery had ſtol'n the Bliſs——

VAINLOVE.

So was true as Turtle——in Imagination, *Ned*, ha? Preach this Doctrine to Huſbands, and the married Women will adore thee.

BELLMOUR.

Why faith I think it will do well enough——If the Huſband be out of the Way, for the Wife to ſhew her Fondneſs and Impatience of his Abſence, by chooſing a Lover as like him as ſhe can, and what is unlike, ſhe may help out with her own Fancy.

VAINLOVE.

But is it not an Abuſe to the Lover to be made a Blind of?

BELLMOUR.

As you ſay the Abuſe is to the Lover, not

not the Huſband: For 'tis an Argument of her great Zeal towards him, that ſhe will enjoy him in Effigy.

VAINLOVE.

It muſt be a very ſuperſtitious Country, where ſuch Zeal paſſes for true Devotion. I doubt it will be damn'd by all our Proteſtant Huſbands for flat Idolatry——But if you can make Alderman *Fondlewife* of your Perſuaſion, this Letter will be needleſs.

BELLMOUR.

What, the old Banker with the handſome Wife?

VAINLOVE.

Ay.

BELLMOUR.

Let me ſee, *Lætitia!* Oh 'tis a delicious Morſel. Dear *Frank*, thou art the trueſt Friend in the World.

VAINLOVE.

Ay, am I not? To be continually ſtarting of Hares for you to courſe. We were certainly cut out for one another; for my Temper quits an Amour, juſt where thine takes it up——But read that, it is an Appointment for me, this Evening; when *Fondlewife* will be gone out of Town, to meet the Maſter of a Ship, about the Re-

turn of a Venture which he's in danger of loſing. Read, read.

BELLMOUR *reads.*

Hum, Hum——*Out of Town this Evening, and talks of ſending for Mr.* Spintext *to keep me Company; but I'll take care he ſhall not be at home.* Good! *Spintext!* Oh, the Fanatic one-ey'd Parſon!

VAINLOVE.

Ay.

BELLMOUR *reads.*

Hum, Hum——*That your Converſation will be much more agreeable, if you can counterfeit his Habit to blind the Servants.* Very good! Then I muſt be diſguiſed——With all my Heart——It adds a Guſto to an Amour; gives it the greater Reſemblance of Theft; and among us lewd Mortals, the deeper the Sin the ſweeter. *Frank,* I'm amaz'd at thy Good-nature——

VAINLOVE.

Faith I hate Love when 'tis forc'd upon a Man, as I do Wine——And this Buſineſs is none of my ſeeking; I only happen'd to be once or twice, where *Lætitia* was the handſomeſt Woman in Company, ſo conſequently apply'd myſelf to her—And it ſeems ſhe has taken me at my Word——

Had

Had you been there, or any Body, 't had been the ſame.

BELLMOUR.

I wiſh I may ſucceed as the ſame.

VAINLOVE.

Never doubt it; for if the Spirit of Cuckoldom be once raiſed up in a Woman, the Devil can't lay it, 'till ſhe has done't.

BELLMOUR.

Prithee, what ſort of Fellow is *Fondlewife?*

VAINLOVE.

A kind of Mongrel Zealot, ſometimes very preciſe and peeviſh: But I have ſeen him pleaſant enough in his Way; much addicted to Jealouſy, but more to Fondneſs: So that as he is often jealous without a Cauſe, he's as often ſatisfied without Reaſon.

BELLMOUR.

A very even Temper, and fit for my Purpoſe. I muſt get your Man *Setter* to provide my Diſguiſe.

VAINLOVE.

Ay, you may take him for good and all if you will, for you have made him fit for no Body elſe——Well——

BELLMOUR.

You're going to viſit in return of *Sylvia*'s

Letter——Poor Rogue. Any Hour of the Day or Night will ſerve her——But do you know nothing of a new Rival there?

VAINLOVE.

Yes, *Heartwell,* that ſurly, old, pretended Woman-hater, thinks her virtuous; that's one Reaſon why I fail her: I would have her fret herſelf out of Conceit with me, that ſhe may entertain ſome Thoughts of him. I know he viſits her ev'ry Day.

BELLMOUR.

Yet rails on ſtill, and thinks his Love unknown to us; a little Time will ſwell him ſo, he muſt be forc'd to give it Birth; and the Diſcovery muſt needs be very pleaſant from himſelf; to ſee what Pains he will take, and how he will ſtrain to be deliver'd of a Secret, when he has miſcarried of it already.

VAINLOVE.

Well, good Morrow, let's dine together; I'll meet at the old Place.

BELLMOUR.

With all my Heart; it lies convenient for us to pay our Afternoon Services to our Miſtreſſes; I find I am damnably in Love, I'm ſo uneaſy for not having ſeen *Belinda* Yeſterday.

VAIN-

VAINLOVE.

But I ſaw my *Araminta,* yet am as impatient.

SCENE II.

BELLMOUR *alone.*

BELLMOUR.

WHY what a Cormorant in Love am I! who, not contented with the Slavery of honorable Love in one Place, and the Pleaſure of enjoying ſome half a ſcore Miſtreſſes of my own acquiring; muſt yet take *Vainlove*'s Buſineſs upon my Hands, becauſe it lay too heavy upon his; ſo am not only forc'd to lie with other Men's Wives for 'em, but muſt alſo undertake the harder Taſk of obliging their Miſtreſſes——I muſt take up, or I ſhall never hold out; Fleſh and Blood cannot bear it always.

SCENE III.

[*To him*] SHARPER.

SHARPER.

I'M ſorry to ſee this, *Ned:* Once a Man comes to his Soliloquies I give him for gone.

BELLMOUR.

Sharper, I'm glad to ſee thee.

SHARPER.

What, is *Belinda* cruel, that you are ſo thoughtful?

BELLMOUR.

No, faith, not for that——But there's a Buſineſs of Conſequence fall'n out to Day, that requires ſome Conſideration.

SHARPER.

Prithee what mighty Buſineſs of Conſequence canſt thou have?

BELLMOUR.

Why you muſt know, 'tis a Piece of Work toward the finiſhing of an Alderman; it ſeems I muſt put the laſt Hand to it, and dub him Cuckold, that he may be of equal Dignity with the reſt of his Brethren: So I muſt beg *Belinda*'s Pardon.—

SHARPER.

SHARPER.

Faith e'en give her over for good and all; you can have no Hopes of getting her for a Miſtreſs; and ſhe is too proud, too inconſtant, too affected, and too witty, and too handſome for a Wife.

BELLMOUR.

But ſhe can't have too much Money—There's twelve thouſand Pound, *Tom.*—'Tis true ſhe is exceſſively foppiſh and affected, but in my Conſcience I believe the Baggage loves me: For ſhe never ſpeaks well of me herſelf, nor ſuffers any Body elſe to rail at me. Then, as I told you, there's twelve thouſand Pound——Hum ——Why faith upon ſecond Thoughts, ſhe does not appear to be very affected neither——Give her her Due, I think the Woman's a Woman, and that's all. As ſuch I'm ſure I ſhall like her; for the Devil take me if I don't love all the Sex.

SHARPER.

And here comes one who ſwears as heartily he hates all the Sex.

SCENE

SCENE IV.

[*To them*] HEARTWELL.

BELLMOUR.

WHO, *Heartwell!* Ay, but he knows better Things — How now *George,* where haſt thou been ſnarling odious Truths, and entertaining Company, like a Phyſician, with Diſcourſe of their Diſeaſes and Infirmities? What fine Lady haſt thou been putting out of Conceit with herſelf, and perſuading that the Face ſhe had been making all the Morning, was none of her own? for I know thou art as unmannerly and as unwelcome to a Woman, as a Looking-Glaſs after the Small-Pox.

HEARTWELL.

I confeſs I have not been ſneering fulſome Lies and nauſeous Flattery, fawning upon a little tawdry Whore, that will fawn upon me again, and entertain any Puppy that comes, like a Tumbler, with the ſame Tricks over and over. For ſuch I gueſs may have been your late Employment.

BELL-

BELLMOUR.

Would thou hadſt come a little ſooner, *Vainlove* would have wrought thy Converſion, and been a Champion for the Cauſe.

HEARTWELL.

What, has he been here? that's one of Love's *April*-Fools, is always upon ſome Errand that's to no Purpoſe, ever embarking in Adventures, yet never comes to Harbor.

SHARPER.

That's becauſe he always ſets out in foul Weather, loves to buffet with the Winds, meet the Tide, and ſail in the Teeth of Oppoſition.

HEARTWELL.

What, has he not dropt Anchor at *Araminta?*

BELLMOUR.

Truth on't is ſhe fits his Temper beſt, is a Kind of floating Iſland; ſometimes ſeems in Reach, then vaniſhes and keeps him buſied in the Search.

SHARPER.

She had need have a good Share of Senſe to manage ſo capricious a Lover.

BELLMOUR.

Faith I don't know, he's of a Temper the moſt eaſy to himſelf in the World; he takes

takes as much always of an Amour as he cares for, and quits it when it grows ſtale or unpleaſant.

SHARPER.

An Argument of very little Paſſion, very good Underſtanding, and very ill Nature.

HEARTWELL.

And proves that *Vainlove* plays the Fool with Diſcretion.

SHARPER.

You *Bellmour* are bound in Gratitude to ſtickle for him; you with Pleaſure reap that Fruit, which he takes Pains to ſow: he does the Drudgery in the Mine, and you ſtamp your Image on the Gold.

BELLMOUR.

He's of another Opinion, and ſays I do the Drudgery in the Mine. Well, we have each our Share of Sport, and each that which he likes beſt; 'tis his Diverſion to ſet, 'tis mine to cover the Partridge.

HEARTWELL.

And it ſhould be mine to let 'em go again.

SHARPER.

Not till you had mouth'd a little, *George*, I think that's all thou art fit for now.

HEART-

HEARTWELL.

Good Mr. Young-Fellow, you're miſtaken; as able as yourſelf, and as nimble too, tho' I mayn't have ſo much Mercury in my Limbs; 'tis true indeed, I don't force Appetite, but wait the natural Call of my Luſt, and think it time enough to be lewd, after I have had the Temptation.

BELLMOUR.

Time enough! ay, too ſoon, I ſhould rather have expected, from a Perſon of your Gravity.

HEARTWELL.

Yet it is oftentimes too late with ſome of you young, termagant, flaſhy Sinners—you have all the Guilt of the Intention, and none of the Pleaſure of the Practice—'tis true you are ſo eager in Purſuit of the Temptation, that you ſave the Devil the Trouble of leading you into it: Nor is it out of Diſcretion, that you don't ſwallow that very Hook yourſelves have baited, but you are cloy'd with the Preparative, and what you mean for a Whet, turns the Edge of your puny Stomachs. Your Love is like your Courage, which you ſhew for the firſt Year or two upon all Occaſions; 'till in a little Time, being diſabled or diſarmed, you abate of your Vigor; and that

that daring Blade which was ſo often drawn, is bound to the Peace for ever after.

BELLMOUR.

Thou art an old Fornicator of a ſingular good Principle indeed! and art for encouraging Youth, that they may be as wicked as thou art at thy Years.

HEARTWELL.

I am for having every Body be what they pretend to be; a Whoremaſter be a Whoremaſter; and not like *Vainlove,* kiſs a Lap-Dog with Paſſion, when it would diſguſt him from the Lady's own Lips.

BELLMOUR.

That only happens ſometimes, where the Dog has the ſweeter Breath, for the more cleanly Conveyance. But *George,* you muſt not quarrel with little Gallantries of this Nature: Women are often won by 'em. Who would refuſe to kiſs a Lap-Dog, if it were preliminary to the Lips of his Lady?

SHARPER.

Or omit playing with her Fan, and cooling her if ſhe were hot, when it might entitle him to the Office of warming her when ſhe ſhould be cold?

BELL-

BELLMOUR.

What is it to read a Play in a rainy Day? Though you ſhould be now and then interrupted in a witty Scene, and ſhe perhaps preſerve her Laughter, 'till the Jeſt were over; even, that, may be born with, conſidering the Reward in Proſpect.

HEARTWELL.

I confeſs you that are Women's Aſſes bear greater Burdens: Are forced to undergo Dreſſing, Dancing, Singing, Sighing, Whining, Rhyming, Flattering, Lying, Grinning, Cringing, and the Drudgery of Loving to boot.

BELLMOUR.

O Brute, the Drudgery of Loving!

HEARTWELL.

Ay, why to come to Love through all theſe Incumbrances, is like coming to an Eſtate overcharg'd with Debts; which by the Time you have paid, yields no further Profit than what the bare Tillage and Manuring of the Land will produce at the Expence of your own Sweat.

BELLMOUR.

Prithee how doſt thou love?

SHARPER.

He! he hates the Sex.

HEARTWELL.

So I hate Phyſic too——yet I may love to take it for my Health.

BELLMOUR.

Well come off, *George,* if at any Time you ſhould be taken ſtraying.

SHARPER.

He has need of ſuch an Excuſe, conſidering the preſent State of his Body.

HEARTWELL.

How d'ye mean?

SHARPER.

Why if whoring be purging (as you call it) then, I may ſay, Marriage, is entering into a Courſe of Phyſic.

BELLMOUR.

How, *George,* does the Wind blow there?

HEARTWELL.

It will as ſoon blow *North* and by *South* —Marry, quotha! I hope in Heaven I have a greater Portion of Grace, and I think I have baited too many of thoſe Traps, to be caught in one myſelf.

BELLMOUR.

Who the Devil would have thee? unleſs 'twere an Oyſter-Woman, to propagate young Fry for *Billingſgate*——thy Talent will

will never recommend thee to any Thing of better Quality.

HEARTWELL.

My Talent is chiefly that of ſpeaking Truth, which I don't expect ſhould ever recommend me to People of Quality —I thank Heaven, I have very honeſtly purchas'd the Hatred of all the great Families in Town.

SHARPER.

And you in Return of Spleen hate them: But could you hope to be receiv'd into the Alliance of a noble Family——

HEARTWELL.

No, I hope I ſhall never merit that Affliction—to be puniſh'd with a Wife of Birth— be a Stag of the firſt Head and bear my Horns aloft, like one of the Supporters of my Wife's Coat. 'Sdeath I would not be a Cuckold to e'er an illuſtrious Whore in *England.*

BELLMOUR.

What not to make your Family, Man, and provide for your Children?

SHARPER.

For her Children you mean.

HEARTWELL.

Ay, there you've nick'd it—there's the Devil upon Devil—O the Pride and Joy

of Heart 'twou'd be to me, to have my Son and Heir reſemble ſuch a Duke—to have a fleering Coxcomb ſcoff and cry, Mr. your Son's mighty like his Grace, has juſt his Smile and Air of's Face. Then replies another—Methinks he has more of the Marquis of ſuch a Place, about his Noſe and Eyes; though he has my Lord what-d'ye-call's Mouth to a Tittle—— Then, I, to put it off as unconcern'd, come chuck the Infant under the Chin, force a Smile, and cry, Ay, the Boy takes after his Mother's Relations—when the Devil and ſhe knows, 'tis a little Compound of the whole Body of Nobility.

BELLMOUR, SHARPER.

Ha! ha! ha!

BELLMOUR.

Well, but *George,* I have one Queſtion to aſk you——

HEARTWELL.

Pſhaw, I have prattled away my Time—I hope you are in no Haſte for an Anſwer—for I ſhan't ſtay now.

[*Looking on his Watch.*

BELLMOUR.

Nay, prithee *George*——

HEARTWELL.

No, beſides my Buſineſs, I ſee a Fool coming this Way. Adieu. SCENE

SCENE V.

SHARPER, BELLMOUR.

BELLMOUR.

WHAT does he mean? Oh, 'tis Sir *Joseph Wittoll*, with his Friend; but I see he has turn'd the Corner, and goes another Way.

SHARPER.

What in the Name of Wonder is it?

BELLMOUR.

Why, a Fool.

SHARPER.

'Tis a tawdry Outside.

BELLMOUR.

And a very beggarly Lining——yet he may be worth your Acquaintance—a little of thy Chymistry, *Tom*, may extract Gold from that Dirt.

SHARPER.

Say you so? 'faith I am as poor as a Chymist, and would be as industrious. But what was he that follow'd him? is not he a Dragon that watches those Golden Pippins?

BELLMOUR.

Hang him, no, he a Dragon! if he be 'tis a very peaceful one, I can inſure his Anger dormant; or ſhould he ſeem to rouſe, 'tis but well laſhing him, and he will ſleep like a Top.

SHARPER.

Ay, is he of that Kidney?

BELLMOUR.

Yet is ador'd by that Bigot Sir *Joſeph Wittoll,* as the Image of Valor: He calls him his Back, and indeed they are never aſunder——yet laſt Night, I know not by what Miſchance, the Knight was alone, and had fallen into the Hands of ſome Night-walkers, who I ſuppoſe would have pillaged him: But I chanc'd to come by, and reſcued him: Though I believe he was heartily frightened, for as ſoon as ever he was looſe, he ran away, without ſtaying to ſee who had help'd him.

SHARPER.

Is that Bully of his in the Army?

BELLMOUR.

No, but is a Pretender, and wears the Habit of a Soldier; which now-a-days as often clokes Cowardice, as a black Gown does Atheiſm — You muſt know he has been abroad — went purely to run away from

from a Campaign; enrich'd himſelf with the Plunder of a few Oaths — and here vents 'em againſt the General, who ſlighting Men of Merit, and preferring only thoſe of Intereſt, has made him quit the Service.

SHARPER.

Wherein no doubt he magnifies his own Performance.

BELLMOUR.

Speaks Miracles, is the Drum to his own Praiſe—the only Implement of a Soldier he reſembles, like that, being full of bluſtring Noiſe and Emptineſs—

SHARPER.

And like that, of no Uſe but to be beaten.

BELLMOUR.

Right; but, then, the Compariſon breaks, for he will take a Drubbing with as little Noiſe as a Pulpit Cuſhion.

SHARPER.

His Name, and I have done?

BELLMOUR.

Why that, to paſs it current too, he has gilded with a Title; he is call'd Captain *Bluffe*.

SHARPER.

Well, I'll endeavour his Acquaintance —you ſteer another Courſe, are bound

For Love's fair Iſle: I, for the golden Coaſt.
May each ſucceed in what he wiſhes moſt.

End of the Firſt Act.

ACT

ACT II. SCENE I.

Sir JOSEPH WITTOLL, SHARPER *following*.

SHARPER.

SURE that's he, and alone.

Sir JOSEPH.

Um—Ay this, this is the very damn'd Place; the inhuman Cannibals, the bloody-minded Villains would have butcher'd me laſt Night: No doubt, they would have flay'd me alive, have ſold my Skin, and devour'd, *&c.*

SHARPER.

How's this!

Sir JOSEPH.

An it hadn't been for a civil Gentleman as came by and frightened 'em away—but agad I durſt not ſtay to give him Thanks.

SHARPER.

This muſt be *Bellmour* he means—ha! I have a Thought——

Sir JOSEPH.

Zooks, would the Captain would come; the very Remembrance makes me quake; agad I ſhall never be reconciled to this Place heartily.

SHARPER.

SHARPER.

'Tis but trying, and being where I am at worſt. Now Luck! — curs'd Fortune! this muſt be the Place, this damn'd unlucky Place ——

Sir JOSEPH.

Agad and ſo 'tis — why here has been more Miſchief done I perceive.

SHARPER.

No, 'tis gone, 'tis loſt — ten thouſand Devils on that Chance which drew me hither; ay here, juſt here, this Spot to me is Hell; Nothing to be found, but the Deſpair of what I've loſt.

[*Looking about as in Search.*

Sir JOSEPH.

Poor Gentleman — by the Lord *Harry* I'll ſtay no longer, for I have found too —

SHARPER.

Ha! who's that has found? What have you found? reſtore it quickly, or by —

Sir JOSEPH.

Not I, Sir, not I, as I've a Soul to be ſav'd, I have found Nothing but what has been to my Loſs, as I may ſay, and as you were ſaying, Sir.

SHARPER.

O your Servant, Sir, you are ſafe then it ſeems; 'tis an ill Wind that blows Nobody

body good: Well, you may rejoice over my ill Fortune, ſince it paid the Price of your Ranſom.

Sir JOSEPH.

I rejoice! agad not I, Sir: I'm very ſorry for your Loſs, with all my Heart, Blood and Guts, Sir; and if you did but know me, you'd ne'er ſay I were ſo ill-natur'd.

SHARPER.

Know you; why can you be ſo ungrateful, to forget me!

Sir JOSEPH.

O Lord! forget him! No, no, Sir, I don't forget you—becauſe I never ſaw your Face before, agad. Ha! ha! ha!

SHARPER.

How! [*Angrily.*

Sir JOSEPH.

Stay, ſtay Sir, let me recollect — he's a damn'd angry Fellow — I believe I had better remember him, 'till I can get out of his Sight; but out o'Sight out o'Mind agad. [*Aſide.*

SHARPER.

Methought the Service I did you laſt Night, Sir, in preſerving you from thoſe Ruffians, might have taken better Root in your ſhallow Memory.

Sir

Sir JOSEPH.

Gads-Daggers-Belts-Blades and Scabbards, this is the very Gentleman! How ſhall I make him a Return ſuitable to the Greatneſs of his Merit——I had a pretty Thing to that Purpoſe, if he han't frighted it out of my Memory. Hem! hem! Sir, I moſt ſubmiſſively implore your Pardon for my Tranſgreſſion of Ingratitude and Omiſſion; having my entire Dependence, Sir, upon the Superfluity of your Goodneſs, which, like an Inundation will, I hope, totally immerge the Recollection of my Error, and leave me floating in your Sight, upon the full blown Bladders of Repentance——by the Help of which, I ſhall once more hope to ſwim into your Favor. [*Bows.*

SHARPER.

So-h, O Sir I am eaſily pacify'd, the Acknowledgment of a Gentleman ——

Sir JOSEPH.

Acknowledgment! Sir I am all over Acknowledgment, and will not ſtick to ſhew it in the greateſt Extremity, by Night, or by Day, in Sickneſs, or in Health, Winter, or Summer, all Seaſons and Occaſions ſhall teſtify the Reality and Gratitude of your ſuperabundant humble Servant Sir *Joſeph Wittoll* Knight. Hem! Hem!

SHARPER.

SHARPER.

Sir *Joſeph Wittoll!*

Sir JOSEPH.

The ſame, Sir, of *Wittoll Hall* in *Comitatu Bucks.*

SHARPER.

Is it poſſible! Then, I am happy, to have obliged the Mirror of Knighthood and Pink of Courteſy in the Age; let me embrace you.

Sir JOSEPH.

O Lord, Sir!

SHARPER.

My Loſs I eſteem as a Trifle repaid with Intereſt, ſince it has purchas'd me the Friendſhip and Acquaintance of the Perſon in the World, whoſe Character I admire.

Sir JOSEPH.

You are only pleas'd to ſay ſo, Sir—— But pray if I may be ſo bold, what is that Loſs you mention?

SHARPER.

O term it no longer ſo, Sir. In the Scuffle, laſt Night, I only dropt a Bill of a hundred Pound, which I confeſs, I came half deſpairing to recover; but thanks to my better Fortune——

Sir

Sir JOSEPH.

You have found it Sir then it ſeems; I profeſs I'm heartily glad——

SHARPER.

Sir your humble Servant——I don't queſtion but you are; that you have ſo cheap an Opportunity of expreſſing your Gratitude and Generoſity. Since the paying ſo trivial a Sum, will wholly acquit you and doubly engage me.

Sir JOSEPH.

What a dickens does he mean by a trivial Sum? [*Aſide*] But han't you found it, Sir?

SHARPER.

No otherwiſe I vow to Gad but in my Hopes in you, Sir.

Sir JOSEPH.

Hum.

SHARPER.

But that's ſufficient—'Twere Injuſtice to doubt the Honor of Sir *Joſeph Wittoll.*

Sir JOSEPH.

O Lord, Sir.

SHARPER.

You are above (I'm ſure) a Thought ſo low, to ſuffer me to loſe what was ventur'd in your Service; nay 'twas in a Manner—paid down for your Deliverance; 'twas ſo much

much lent you — And you ſcorn, I'll ſay that for you ——

Sir JOSEPH.

Nay I'll ſay that for myſelf (with your Leave, Sir,) I do ſcorn a dirty Thing. But agad I'm a little out of Pocket at preſent.

SHARPER.

Pſhaw, you can't want a hundred Pound. Your Word is ſufficient any where: 'Tis but borrowing ſo much Dirt, you have large Acres and can ſoon repay it —— Money is but Dirt, Sir *Joſeph*—Mere Dirt.

Sir JOSEPH.

But I profeſs, 'tis a Dirt I have waſhed my Hands of at preſent; I have laid it all out upon my Back.

SHARPER.

Are you ſo extravagant in Clothes, Sir *Joſeph?*

Sir JOSEPH.

Ha! ha! ha! a very good Jeſt I profeſs, ha! ha! ha! a very good Jeſt, and I did not know that I had ſaid it, and that's a better Jeſt than t'other. 'Tis a ſign you and I han't been long acquainted; you have loſt a good Jeſt for want of knowing me— I only mean a Friend of mine whom I call my Back; he ſticks as cloſe to me, and follows me through all Dangers — he is indeed

indeed Back, Breaſt and Headpiece as it were to me—agad he's a brave Fellow—Paugh, I am quite another Thing, when I am with him: I don't fear the Devil (bleſs us) almoſt if he be by. Ah — had he been with me laſt Night —

SHARPER.

If he had, Sir, what then? he could have done no more, nor perhaps have ſuffered ſo much —— had he a hundred Pound to loſe? [*Angrily.*

Sir JOSEPH.

O Lord, Sir, by no means (but I might have ſav'd a hundred Pound) I meant innocently, as I hope to be ſaved Sir (a damn'd hot Fellow) only as I was ſaying, I let him have all my ready Money to redeem his great Sword from Limbo—But, Sir, I have a Letter of Credit to Alderman *Fondlewife,* as far as two hundred Pound, and this Afternoon you ſhall ſee I am a Perſon, ſuch a one as you would wiſh to have met with ——

SHARPER.

That you are, I'll be ſworn [*Aſide.*] Why that's great and like yourſelf.

SCENE

SCENE II.

[*To them*] *Captain* BLUFFE.

Sir JOSEPH.

O Here a' comes — Ay my *Hector* of *Troy,* welcome my Bully, my Back; agad my Heart has gone a-pit-pat for thee.

BLUFFE.

How now, my young Knight? Not for Fear I hope; he that knows me muſt be a Stranger to Fear.

Sir JOSEPH.

Nay agad I hate Fear ever ſince I had like to have died of a Fright — But —

BLUFFE.

But! Look you here Boy, here's your Antidote, here's your Jeſuit's Powder for a ſhaking Fit—But who haſt thou got with thee, is he of Mettle?

[*Laying his Hand upon his Sword.*

Sir JOSEPH.

Ay, Bully, a deviliſh ſmart Fellow: a' will fight like a Cock.

BLUFFE.

Say you ſo? then I honor him — but

has he been abroad? for every Cock will fight upon his own Dunghill.

Sir JOSEPH.

I don't know, but I'll preſent you —

BLUFFE.

I'll recommend myſelf — Sir, I honor you; I underſtand you love fighting, I reverence a Man that loves fighting. Sir, I kiſs your Hilts.

SHARPER.

Sir, your Servant, but you are miſinform'd, for unleſs it be to ſerve my particular Friend, as Sir *Joſeph* here, my Country, or my Religion, or in ſome very juſtifiable Cauſe, I'm not for it.

BLUFFE.

O Lord, I beg your Pardon, Sir, I find you are not of my Palate, you can't reliſh a Diſh of fighting without ſweet Sauce. Now I think — fighting, for fighting ſake's ſufficient Cauſe; fighting, to me's Religion and the Laws.

Sir JOSEPH.

Ah, well ſaid my *Hero;* was not that great, Sir? by the Lord *Harry* he ſays true; fighting, is Meat, Drink and Cloth to him. But Back, this Gentleman is one of the beſt Friends I have in the World, and ſaved my Life laſt Night——You know I told you.

BLUFFE.

BLUFFE.

Ay! Then I honor him again — Sir may I crave your Name?

SHARPER.

Ay, Sir, my Name's *Sharper*.

Sir JOSEPH.

Pray Mr. *Sharper* embrace my Back — very well—by the Lord *Harry*, Mr. *Sharper*, he's as brave a Fellow as *Cannibal*, are not you Bully-Back?

SHARPER.

Hannibal I believe you mean, Sir *Joſeph*.

BLUFFE.

Undoubtedly he did Sir; faith *Hannibal* was a very pretty Fellow —— but Sir *Joſeph*, Compariſons are odious—*Hannibal* was a very pretty Fellow in thoſe Days, it muſt be granted—but alas Sir! were he alive now, he would be Nothing, Nothing in the Earth.

SHARPER.

How Sir! I make a doubt, if there be at this Day a greater General breathing.

BLUFFE.

Oh excuſe me, Sir; have you ſerv'd abroad, Sir?

SHARPER.

Not I really, Sir.

BLUFFE.

Oh, I thought ſo — Why then you can know Nothing, Sir: I am afraid you ſcarce know the Hiſtory of the late War in *Flanders,* with all its Particulars.

SHARPER.

Not I, Sir, no more than public Letters, or *Gazettes* tell us.

BLUFFE.

Gazette! Why there again now — Why, Sir, there are not three Words of Truth, the Year round, put into the *Gazette!* — I'll tell you a ſtrange Thing now as to that—You muſt know, Sir, I was reſident in *Flanders* the laſt Campaign, had a ſmall Poſt there; but no matter for that — Perhaps, Sir, there was ſcarce any Thing of moment done but an humble Servant of yours, that ſhall be nameleſs, was an Eye Witneſs of — I won't ſay had the greateſt Share in't. Tho' I might ſay that too, ſince I name Nobody you know—Well, Mr. *Sharper,* would you think it? In all this Time—as I hope for a Truncheon—this raſcally *Gazette*-writer never ſo much as once mention'd me — Not once by the Wars — Took no more Notice, than as if *Noll Bluffe* had not been in the Land of the Living.

SHARPER.

SHARPER.

Strange!

Sir JOSEPH.

Yet by the Lord *Harry* 'tis true Mr. *Sharper,* for I went every Day to Coffee-Houſes to read the *Gazette* myſelf.

BLUFFE.

Ay, ay, no matter—You ſee, Mr. *Sharper,* after all I am content to retire — Live a private Perſon ——— *Scipio* and others have done it.

SHARPER.

Impudent Rogue. [*Aſide.*

Sir JOSEPH.

Ay, this damn'd Modeſty of yours — Agad if he would put in for't he might be made General himſelf yet.

BLUFFE.

Oh fy, no Sir *Joſeph*—You know I hate this.

Sir JOSEPH.

Let me but tell Mr. *Sharper* a little, how you eat Fire once out of the Mouth of a Cannon—agad he did; thoſe impenetrable Whiſkers of his have confronted Flames ———

BLUFFE.

Death, what do you mean, Sir *Joſeph?*

Sir JOSEPH.

Look you now, I tell you he's ſo modeſt he'll own Nothing.

BLUFFE.

Piſh, you have put me out, I have forgot what I was about. Pray hold your Tongue, and give me Leave. [*Angrily.*

Sir JOSEPH.

I am dumb.

BLUFFE.

This Sword I think I was telling you of, Mr. *Sharper*—This Sword I'll maintain to be the beſt Divine, Anatomiſt, Lawyer or Caſuiſt in *Europe;* it ſhall decide a Controverſy or ſplit a Cauſe——

Sir JOSEPH.

Nay, now I muſt ſpeak; it will ſplit a Hair, by the Lord *Harry,* I have ſeen it.

BLUFFE.

Zounds, Sir, it's a Lie, you have not ſeen it, nor ſhan't ſee it; Sir, I ſay you can't ſee; what d'ye ſay to that now?

Sir JOSEPH.

I am blind.

BLUFFE.

Death, had any other Man interrupted me——

Sir JOSEPH.

Good Mr. *Sharper* ſpeak to him; I dare not look that Way. SHARPER.

SHARPER.

Captain, Sir *Joſeph*'s penitent.

BLUFFE.

O I am calm Sir, calm as a diſcharged Culverin—But 'twas indiſcreet, when you know what will provoke me—Nay, come Sir *Joſeph,* you know my Heat's ſoon over.

Sir JOSEPH.

Well I am a Fool ſometimes—But I'm ſorry.

BLUFFE.

Enough.

Sir JOSEPH.

Come, we'll go take a Glaſs to drown Animoſities. Mr. *Sharper,* will you partake?

SHARPER.

I wait on you, Sir; nay, pray Captain—You are Sir *Joſeph*'s Back.

SCENE III.

ARAMINTA, BELINDA, BETTY *waiting in* ARAMINTA's *Apartment.*

BELINDA.

AH! Nay, Dear—prithee good, dear ſweet Couſin no more, oh Gad, I ſwear you'd make one ſick to hear you.

ARAMINTA.

Bleſs me! what have I ſaid to move you thus?

BELINDA.

Oh you have raved, talked idly, and all in Commendation of that filthy, aukward, two-legg'd Creature, Man—you don't know what you've ſaid, your Fever has tranſported you.

ARAMINTA.

If Love be the Fever which you mean, kind Heav'n avert the Cure: Let me have Oil to feed that Flame and never let it be extinct, 'till I myſelf am Aſhes.

BELINDA.

There was a Whine!——O Gad I hate your horrid Fancy——This Love is the Devil, and ſure to be in Love is to be poſſeſs'd——'Tis in the Head, the Heart, the Blood, the—All over—O Gad you are quite ſpoil'd——I ſhall loathe the Sight of Mankind for your Sake.

ARAMINTA.

Fy, this is groſs Affectation—A little of *Bellmour*'s Company would change the Scene.

BELINDA.

Filthy Fellow! I wonder, Couſin——

ARA-

ARAMINTA.

I wonder, Couſin, you ſhould imagine, I don't perceive you love him.

BELINDA.

Oh I love your hideous Fancy! Ha! ha! ha! love a Man!

ARAMINTA.

Love a Man! yes, you would not love a Beaſt.

BELINDA.

Of all Beaſts not an Aſs—Which is ſo like your *Vainlove*——Lard I have ſeen an Aſs look ſo chagrin, Ha! ha! ha! (you muſt pardon me, I can't help laughing) that an abſolute Lover would have concluded the poor Creature to have had Darts, and Flames, and Altars, and all that in his Breaſt. *Araminta,* come I'll talk ſeriouſly to you now; could you but ſee with my Eyes, the Buffoonery of one Scene of Addreſs, a Lover, ſet out with all his Equipage and Appurtenances; O Gad! ſure you would—But you play the Game, and conſequently can't ſee the Miſcarriages obvious to every Stander-by.

ARAMINTA.

Yes, yes, I can ſee Something near it when you and *Bellmour* meet. You don't know that you dreamt of *Bellmour* laſt Night.

Night, and call'd him aloud in your Sleep.

BELINDA.

Piſh, I can't help dreaming of the Devil ſometimes; would you from thence infer I love him?

ARAMINTA.

But that's not all; you caught me in your Arms when you named him, and preſs'd me to your Boſom — Sure if I had not pinch'd you 'till you wak'd you had ſtifled me with Kiſſes.

BELINDA.

O barbarous Aſperſion!

ARAMINTA.

No Aſperſion, Couſin, we are alone — Nay I can tell you more.

BELINDA.

I deny it all.

ARAMINTA.

What before you hear it?

BELINDA.

My Denial is premeditated like your Malice——Lard, Couſin, you talk oddly ——Whatever the Matter is, O my Sol, I'm afraid you'll follow evil Courſes.

ARAMINTA.

Ha! ha! ha! this is pleaſant.

BELINDA.

You may laugh, but——

ARA-

ARAMINTA.

Ha! ha! ha!

BELINDA.

You think the malicious Grin becomes you——The Devil take *Bellmour*——Why do you tell me of him?

ARAMINTA.

Oh is it come out——now you are angry, I am ſure you love him. I tell Nobody elſe, Couſin — I have not betray'd you yet.

BELINDA.

Prithee tell it all the World, it's falſe.

ARAMINTA.

Come then, kiſs and Friends.

BELINDA.

Piſh.

ARAMINTA.

Prithee don't be ſo peeviſh.

BELINDA.

Prithee don't be ſo impertinent.—*Betty.*

ARAMINTA.

Ha! ha! ha!

BETTY.

Did your Ladyſhip call, Madam?

BELINDA.

Get my Hoods and Tippet, and bid the Footman call a Chair.

ARA-

ARAMINTA.

I hope you are not going out in Dudgeon, Couſin.

SCENE IV.

[*To them*] FOOTMAN.

FOOTMAN.

MADAM, there are——

BELINDA.

Is there a Chair?

FOOTMAN.

No, Madam, there are Mr. *Bellmour* and Mr. *Vainlove* to wait upon your Ladyſhip.

ARAMINTA.

Are they below?

FOOTMAN.

No, Madam, they ſent before, to know if you were at Home.

BELINDA.

The Viſit's to you, Couſin, I ſuppoſe I am at my Liberty.

ARAMINTA.

Be ready to ſhew 'em up.

SCENE

SCENE V.

[*To them*] BETTY *with Hoods and Looking-Glaſs.*

I Can't tell, Couſin, I believe we are equally concern'd: But if you continue your Humor, it won't be very entertaining — I know ſhe'd fain be perſuaded to ſtay. [*Aſide.*

BELINDA.

I ſhall oblige you, in leaving you to the full and free Enjoyment of that Converſation you admire. —— Let me ſee; hold the Glaſs — Lard I look wretchedly to Day!

ARAMINTA.

Betty, why don't you help my Couſin? [*Putting on her Hoods.*

BELINDA.

Hold off your Fiſts, and ſee that he gets a Chair with a high Roof, or a very low Seat — Stay, come back here, you Mrs. Fidget — You are ſo ready to go to the Footman — Here, take 'em all again, my Mind's chang'd, I won't go.

SCENE

SCENE VI.

ARAMINTA, BELINDA.

ARAMINTA.

SO, this I expected — You won't oblige me then, Couſin, and let me have all the Company to myſelf?

BELINDA.

No; upon Deliberation, I have too much Charity to truſt you to yourſelf. The Devil watches all Opportunities; and in this favorable Diſpoſition of your Mind, Heav'n knows how far you may be tempted: I am tender of your Reputation.

ARAMINTA.

I am oblig'd to you — But who's malicious now, *Belinda*.

BELINDA.

Not I; witneſs my Heart, I ſtay out of pure Affection.

ARAMINTA.

In my Conſcience I believe you.

SCENE

SCENE VII.

[*To them*] VAINLOVE, BELLMOUR, FOOTMAN.

BELLMOUR.

SO, Fortune be prais'd! To find you both within, Ladies, is —

ARAMINTA.

No Miracle, I hope.

BELLMOUR.

Not o'your Side, Madam, I confeſs — But my Tyrant there and I, are two Buckets that can never come together.

BELINDA.

Nor are ever like — Yet we often meet and claſh.

BELLMOUR.

How, never like! marry, *Hymen* forbid. But this it is to run ſo extravagantly in Debt; I have laid out ſuch a World of Love in your Service, that you think you can never be able to pay me all: So ſhun me for the ſame Reaſon that you would a Dun.

BELINDA.

Ay, on my Conſcience, and the moſt impertinent and troubleſome of Duns — a Dun

Dun for Money will be quiet, when he ſees his Debtor has not wherewithal—— But a Dun for Love is an eternal Torment that never reſts——

BELLMOUR.

'Till he has created Love where there was none, and then gets it for his Pains. For Importunity in Love, like Importunity at Court, firſt creates its own Intereſt, and then purſues it for the Favor.

ARAMINTA.

Favors that are got by Impudence and Importunity, are like Diſcoveries from the Rack, when the afflicted Perſon, for his Eaſe, ſometimes confeſſes Secrets his Heart knows nothing of.

VAINLOVE.

I ſhould rather think Favors, ſo gain'd, to be due Rewards to indefatigable Devotion——For as Love is a Deity, he muſt be ſerv'd by Prayer.

BELINDA.

O Gad, would you would all pray to Love then, and let us alone.

VAINLOVE.

You are the Temples of Love, and 'tis through you, our Devotion muſt be convey'd.

ARA-

ARAMINTA.

Rather, poor ſilly Idols of your own making, which, upon the leaſt Diſpleaſure, you forſake, and ſet up new—Every Man, now, changes his Miſtreſs and his Religion, as his Humor varies or his Intereſt.

VAINLOVE.

O Madam——

ARAMINTA.

Nay, come, I find we are growing ſerious, and then we are in great Danger of being dull — If my Muſic Maſter be not gone, I'll entertain you with a new Song, which comes pretty near my own Opinion of Love and your Sex—Who's there? Is Mr. *Gavot* gone? [*Calls.*

FOOTMAN.

Only to the next Door, Madam; I'll call him.

SCENE VIII.

ARAMINTA, BELINDA, VAINLOVE, *and* BELLMOUR.

BELLMOUR.

WHY, you won't hear me with Patience.

ARAMINTA.

What's the Matter, Couſin?

BELLMOUR.

Nothing, Madam, only——

BELINDA.

Prithee hold thy Tongue—Lard, he has ſo peſter'd me with Flames and Stuff——I think I ſhan't endure the Sight of a Fire this Twelvemonth.

BELLMOUR.

Yet all can't melt that cruel frozen Heart.

BELINDA.

O Gad, I hate your hideous Fancy—you ſaid that once before——if you muſt talk impertinently, for Heaven's Sake let it be with Variety; don't come always like the Devil, wrapt in Flames—I'll not hear a Sentence more, that begins with an, *I burn*——Or an, *I beſeech you, Madam.*

BELLMOUR.

But tell me how you would be ador'd—I am very tractable.

BELINDA.

Then know, I would be ador'd in Silence.

BELLMOUR.

Humph, I thought ſo, that you might have all the Talk to yourſelf—you had better

better let me ſpeak; for if my Thoughts fly to any Pitch, I ſhall make villainous Signs.

BELINDA.

What will you get by that? to make ſuch Signs as I won't underſtand.

BELLMOUR.

Ay, but if I'm Tongue-ty'd, I muſt have all my Actions free to —— quicken your Apprehenſion—and I'gad let me tell you, my moſt prevailing Argument is expreſs'd in dumb Show.

SCENE IX.

[*To them*] MUSIC MASTER.

ARAMINTA.

O I am glad we ſhall have a Song to divert the Diſcourſe—— Pray oblige us with the laſt new Song.

SONG.

I.

Thus to a ripe, conſenting Maid,
Poor, old, repenting Delia *ſaid,*

Would you long preſerve your Lover?
Would you ſtill his Goddeſs reign?
Never let him all diſcover,
Never let him much obtain.

II.

Men will admire, adore and die,
While wiſhing at your Feet they lie:
But admitting their Embraces,
Wakes 'em from the Golden Dream;
Nothing's new beſides our Faces,
Every Woman is the ſame.

ARAMINTA.

So, how d'ye like the Song, Gentlemen?

BELLMOUR.

O very well perform'd——but I don't much admire the Words.

ARAMINTA.

I expected it—there's too much Truth in 'em: If Mr. *Gavot* will walk with us in the Garden, we'll have it once again—you may like it better at ſecond Hearing. You'll bring my Couſin.

BELLMOUR.

Faith, Madam, I dare not ſpeak to her, but I'll make Signs.

[*Addreſſes* Belinda *in dumb Show.*

BELINDA.

O foh, your dumb Rhetoric is more ridiculous,

diculous, than your talking Impertinence; as an Ape is a much more troublesome Animal than a Parrot.

ARAMINTA.

Ay, Cousin, and 'tis a Sign the Creatures mimic Nature well; for there are few Men, but do more silly Things than they say.

BELLMOUR.

Well, I find my Apishness has paid the Ransom for my Speech, and set it at Liberty — tho', I confess, I could be well enough pleas'd to drive on a Love-Bargain, in that silent Manner — 'twould save a Man a World of Lying and Swearing at the Year's End. Besides I have had a little Experience, that brings to Mind—

When Wit and Reason both have fail'd to move;
Kind Looks and Actions (from Success) do prove,
Ev'n Silence may be Eloquent in Love.

End of the Second Act.

ACT III. SCENE I.

SCENE, *The Street.*

SYLVIA *and* LUCY.

SYLVIA.

WILL he not come then?

LUCY.

Yes, yes, come, I warrant him, if you will go in and be ready to receive him.

SYLVIA.

Why did you not tell me? —— Whom mean you?

LUCY.

Whom you ſhould mean, *Heartwell.*

SYLVIA.

Senſeleſs Creature, I meant my *Vain-love.*

LUCY.

You may as ſoon hope to recover your own Maidenhead, as his Love. Therefore e'en ſet your Heart at Reſt, and in the Name of Opportunity mind your own Buſineſs. Strike *Heartwell* home, before the

the Bait's worn off the Hook. Age will come. He nibbled fairly Yesterday, and, no Doubt, will be eager enough to Day, to swallow the Temptation.

SYLVIA.

Well, since there's no Remedy—Yet tell me—for I would know, though to the Anguish of my Soul; how did he refuse? Tell me—how did he receive my Letter, in Anger or in Scorn?

LUCY.

Neither; but what was ten Times worse, with damn'd, senseless Indifference. By this Light I could have spit in his Face—Receive it! Why he receiv'd it, as I would one of your Lovers that should come empty-handed; as a Court Lord does his Mercer's Bill, or a begging Dedication:—He receiv'd it, as if't had been a Letter from his Wife.

SYLVIA.

What, did he not read it?

LUCY.

Hum'd it over, gave you his Respects, and said, he would take Time to peruse it—but then he was in Haste.

SYLVIA.

Respects, and peruse it! He's gone, and *Araminta* has bewitch'd him from me—

Oh how the Name of Rival fires my Blood—I could curſe 'em both; eternal Jealouſy attend her Love, and Diſappointment meet his. Oh that I could revenge the Torment he has caus'd — methinks I feel the Woman ſtrong within me, and Vengeance kindles in the Room of Love.

LUCY.

I have that in my Head may make Miſchief.

SYLVIA.

How, dear *Lucy?*

LUCY.

You know *Araminta*'s diſſembled Coyneſs has won, and keeps him hers—

SYLVIA.

Could we perſuade him, that ſhe loves another ——

LUCY.

No, you're out; could we perſuade him, that ſhe dotes on him, himſelf—Contrive a kind Letter as from her, 'twould diſguſt his Nicety, and take away his Stomach.

SYLVIA.

Impoſſible, 'twill never take.

LUCY.

Trouble not your Head. Let me alone—I will inform myſelf of what paſt between 'em to Day, and about it ſtraight—Hold, I'm

I'm miſtaken, or that's *Heartwell,* who ſtands talking at the Corner—'tis he—go get you in Madam, receive him pleaſantly, dreſs up your Face in Innocence and Smiles; and diſſemble the very Want of Diſſimulation — You know what will take him.

SYLVIA.

'Tis as hard to counterfeit Love, as it is to conceal it: but I'll do my weak Endeavour, though I fear I have not Art.

LUCY.

Hang Art, Madam, and truſt to Nature for diſſembling.

Man was by Nature Woman's Cully made:
We never are but by ourſelves betray'd.

SCENE II.

HEARTWELL, VAINLOVE *and* BELLMOUR *following.*

BELLMOUR.

HIST, hiſt, is not that *Heartwell* going to *Sylvia?*

VAINLOVE.

He's talking to himſelf, I think; prithee let's try if we can hear him.

HEARTWELL.

HEARTWELL.

Why whither in the Devil's Name am I a going now? Hum — let me think — Is not this *Sylvia*'s Houſe, the Cave of that Enchantreſs, and which conſequently I ought to ſhun as I would Infection? To enter here, is to put on the envenom'd Shirt, to run into the Embraces of a Fever, and in ſome raving Fit, be led to plunge myſelf into that more conſuming Fire, a Woman's Arms. Ha! well recollected, I will recover my Reaſon, and be gone.

BELLMOUR.

Now *Venus* forbid!

VAINLOVE.

Huſh ——

HEARTWELL.

Well, why do you not move? Feet, do your Office — not one Inch; no, 'fore Gad I'm caught — There ſtands my North, and thither my Needle points — Now could I curſe myſelf, yet cannot repent. O thou delicious, damn'd, dear, deſtructive Woman! 'Sdeath how the young Fellows will hoot me! I ſhall be the Jeſt of the Town: Nay, in two Days, I expect to be Chronicled in Ditty, and ſung in woful Ballad, to the Tune of the ſuperannuated Maiden's Comfort, or the Batchelor's Fall; and upon the

the third, I ſhall be hang'd in Effigy, paſted up for the exemplary Ornament of neceſſary Houſes, and Coblers Stalls—Death, I can't think on't—I'll run into the Danger to loſe the Apprehenſion.

SCENE III.

BELLMOUR, VAINLOVE.

BELLMOUR.

A Very certain Remedy, *probatum eſt*—Ha! ha! ha! poor *George*, thou art i'th'right, thou haſt ſold thyſelf to Laughter; the ill-natur'd Town will find the Jeſt juſt where thou haſt loſt it. Ha! ha! how a' ſtruggled, like an old Lawyer between two Fees.

VAINLOVE.

Or a young Wench, between Pleaſure and Reputation.

BELLMOUR.

Or as you did to Day, when half afraid you ſnatch'd a Kiſs from *Araminta*.

VAINLOVE.

She has made a Quarrel on't.

BELLMOUR.

Paugh, Women are only angry at ſuch Offences, to have the Pleaſure of forgiving 'em

VAINLOVE.

VAINLOVE.

And I love to have the Pleaſure of making my Peace—I ſhould not eſteem a Pardon if too eaſily won.

BELLMOUR.

Thou doſt not know what thou would'ſt be at; whether thou would'ſt have her angry or pleas'd. Could'ſt thou be content to marry *Araminta?*

VAINLOVE.

Could you be content to go to Heav'n?

BELLMOUR.

Hum, not immediately, in my Conſcience not heartily? I'd do a little more Good in my Generation firſt, in order to deſerve it.

VAINLOVE.

Nor I to marry *Araminta* 'till I merit her.

BELLMOUR.

But how the Devil doſt thou expect to get her if ſhe never yield?

VAINLOVE.

That's true; but I would ——

BELLMOUR.

Marry her without her Conſent; thou'rt a Riddle beyond Woman ——

SCENE

SCENE IV.

[*To them*] SETTER.

TRUSTY *Setter*, what Tidings? How goes the Project?

SETTER.

As all lewd Projects do, Sir, where the Devil prevents our Endeavours with Success.

BELLMOUR.

A good Hearing, *Setter*.

VAINLOVE.

Well, I'll leave you with your Engineer.

BELLMOUR.

And haſt thou provided Neceſſaries?

SETTER.

All, all, Sir; the large ſanctified Hat, and the little preciſe Band, with a ſwinging long ſpiritual Cloke, to cover carnal Knavery—not forgetting the black Patch, which *Tribulation Spintext* wears, as I'm inform'd, upon one Eye, as a penal Mourning for the ogling Offences of his Youth; and ſome ſay, with that Eye, he firſt diſcover'd the Frailty of his Wife.

BELL-

BELLMOUR.

Well, in this fanatic Father's Habit, will I confeſs *Lætitia.*

SETTER.

Rather prepare her for Confeſſion, Sir, by helping her to Sin.

BELLMOUR.

Be at your Maſter's Lodging in the Evening, I ſhall uſe the Robes.

SCENE V.

SETTER *alone.*

SETTER.

I Shall, Sir—I wonder to which of theſe two Gentlemen I do moſt properly appertain — the one uſes me as his Attendant; the other (being the better acquainted with my Parts) employs me as a Pimp; why that's much the more honorable Employment—by all means—I follow one as my Maſter, t'other follows me as his Conductor.

SCENE VI.

[*To him*] LUCY.

LUCY.

THERE's the Hang-Dog his Man—I had a Power over him in the Reign of my Miſtreſs; but he is too true a *Valet de Chambre* not to affect his Maſter's Faults; and conſequently is revolted from his Allegiance.

SETTER.

Undoubtedly 'tis impoſſible to be a Pimp and not a Man of Parts. That is, without being politic, diligent, ſecret, wary, and ſo forth—And to all this valiant as *Hercules*—That is, paſſively valiant and actively obedient. Ah! *Setter,* what a Treaſure is here loſt for Want of being known.

LUCY.

Here's ſome Villany a-foot, he's ſo thoughtful; may be I may diſcover Something in my Maſk—Worthy Sir, a Word with you. [*Puts on her Maſk.*

SETTER.

Why, if I were known, I might come to be a great Man—

LUCY.

LUCY.

Not to interrupt your Meditation—

SETTER.

And I ſhould not be the firſt that has procur'd his Greatneſs by Pimping.

LUCY.

Now Poverty and the Pox light upon thee, for a contemplative Pimp.

SETTER.

Ha! what art, who thus maliciouſly haſt awaken'd me, from my Dream of Glory? Speak, thou vile Diſturber—

LUCY.

Of thy moſt vile Cogitations——thou poor, conceited Wretch, how wert thou valuing thyſelf, upon thy Maſter's Employment. For he's the Head Pimp to Mr. *Bellmour*.

SETTER.

Good Words, Damſel, or I ſhall—But how doſt thou know my Maſter or me?

LUCY.

Yes, I know both Maſter and Man to be——

SETTER.

To be Men perhaps; nay, faith, like enough; I often march in the Rear of my Maſter, and enter the Breaches which he has made.

LUCY.

LUCY.

Ay, the Breach of Faith, which he has begun: Thou Traitor to thy lawful Princeſs.

SETTER.

Why how now! prithee who art? Lay by that worldly Face and produce your natural Vizor.

LUCY.

No, Sirrah, I'll keep it on to abuſe thee and leave thee without Hopes of Revenge.

SETTER.

Oh! I begin to ſmoke ye; thou art ſome forſaken *Abigail* we have dallied with heretofore—and art come to tickle thy Imagination with Remembrance of Iniquity paſt.

LUCY.

No, thou pitiful Flatterer of thy Maſter's Imperfections; thou Maukin made up of the Shreds and Parings of his ſuperfluous Fopperies.

SETTER.

Thou art thy Miſtreſs's foul ſelf, compoſed of her ſullied Iniquities and Clothing.

LUCY.

Hang thee—Beggar's Cur — Thy Ma-

ſter is but a Mumper in Love, lies canting at the Gate; but never dares preſume to enter the Houſe.

SETTER.

Thou art the Wicket to thy Miſtreſs's Gate, to be opened for all Comers. In fine thou art the high Road to thy Miſtreſs.

LUCY.

Beaſt, filthy Toad, I can hold no longer, look and tremble. [*Unmaſks.*

SETTER.

How, Mrs. *Lucy!*

LUCY.

I wonder thou haſt the Impudence to look me in the Face.

SETTER.

Adſbud, who's in fault, Miſtreſs of mine? who flung the firſt Stone? who undervalued my Function? and who the Devil could know you by Inſtinct?

LUCY.

You could know my Office by Inſtinct, and be hang'd, which you have ſlander'd moſt abominably. It vexes me not what you ſaid of my Perſon; but that my innocent Calling ſhould be expos'd and ſcandalis'd — I cannot bear it.

SETTER.

Nay, faith *Lucy,* I'm ſorry, I'll own myſelf to

to blame, though we were both in fault as to our Offices—Come, I'll make you any Reparation.

LUCY.

Swear.

SETTER.

I do ſwear to the utmoſt of my Power.

LUCY.

To be brief then; what is the Reaſon your Maſter did not appear to Day according to the Summons I brought him?

SETTER.

To anſwer you as briefly——He has a Cauſe to be tried in another Court.

LUCY.

Come tell me in plain Terms, how forward he is with *Araminta*.

SETTER.

Too forward to be turn'd back—Though he's a little in Diſgrace at preſent about a Kiſs which he forced. You and I can kiſs, *Lucy*, without all that.

LUCY.

Stand off—He's a precious Jewel.

SETTER.

And therefore you'd have him to ſet in your Lady's Locket.

LUCY.

Where is he now?

SETTER.

He'll be in the *Piazza* preſently.

LUCY.

Remember to Day's Behaviour—Let me ſee you with a penitent Face.

SETTER.

What, no Token of Amity, *Lucy?* you and I don't uſe to part with dry Lips.

LUCY.

No, no, avaunt—I'll not be ſlabber'd and kiſs'd now—I'm not i'th'Humor.

SETTER.

I'll not quit you ſo—I'll follow and put you into the Humor.

SCENE VII.

Sir JOSEPH WITTOLL, BLUFFE.

BLUFFE.

AND ſo out of your unwonted Generoſity—

Sir JOSEPH.

And Good-nature, Back; I am good-natur'd and I can't help it.

BLUFFE.

You have given him a Note upon *Fondlewife* for a hundred Pound.

Sir JOSEPH.

Ay, ay, poor Fellow, he ventur'd fair for't.

BLUFFE.

BLUFFE.

You have diſoblig'd me in it—for I have Occaſion for the Money, and if you would look me in the Face again and live, go, and force him to re-deliver you the Note—go—and bring it me hither. I'll ſtay here for you.

Sir JOSEPH.

You may ſtay 'till the Day of Judgment then, by the Lord *Harry*. I know better Things than to be run through the Guts for a hundred Pound—Why I gave that hundred Pound for being ſaved, and d'ye think, an there were no Danger, I'll be ſo ungrateful to take it from the Gentleman again?

BLUFFE.

Well, go to him from me—Tell him, I ſay, he muſt refund—or Bilbo's the Word, and Slaughter will enſue———if he refuſe, tell him—but whiſper that—tell him—I'll pink his Soul—but whiſper that ſoftly to him.

Sir JOSEPH.

So ſoftly that he ſhall never hear on't I warrant you———why, what a Devil's the Matter, Bully, are you mad? Or d'ye think I'm mad? Agad for my Part, I don't love

to be the Meſſenger of ill News; 'tis an ungrateful Office—So tell him yourſelf.

BLUFFE.

By theſe Hilts I believe he frightened you into this Compoſition: I believe you gave it him out of Fear, pure paultry Fear—confeſs.

Sir JOSEPH.

No, no, hang't I was not afraid neither—tho' I confeſs he did in a Manner ſnap me up—yet I can't ſay that it was altogether out of Fear, but partly to prevent Miſchief—for he was a deviliſh choleric Fellow: And if my Choler had been up too, agad there would have been Miſchief done, that's flat. And yet I believe if you had been by, I would as ſoon have let him a had a hundred of my Teeth. Adſheart if he ſhould come juſt now when I'm angry, I'd tell him—Mum.

SCENE VIII.

[*To them*] BELLMOUR, SHARPER.

BELLMOUR.

THOU'rt a lucky Rogue; there's your Benefactor, you ought to return him Thanks now you have receiv'd the Favor.

SHARPER.

SHARPER.

Sir *Joſeph*——Your Note was accepted and the Money paid at Sight: I'm come to return my Thanks——

Sir JOSEPH.

They won't be accepted ſo readily as the Bill, Sir.

BELLMOUR.

I doubt the Knight repents, *Tom*—He looks like the Knight of the Sorrowful Face.

SHARPER.

This is a double Generoſity—Do me a Kindneſs and refuſe my Thanks—But I hope you are not offended that I offer'd 'em.

Sir JOSEPH.

May be I am, Sir, may be I am not, Sir, may be I am both, Sir; what then? I hope I may be offended without any Offence to you, Sir.

SHARPER.

Hey day! Captain, what's the Matter? You can tell.

BLUFFE.

Mr. *Sharper*, the Matter is plain—Sir *Joſeph* has found out your Trick, and does not care to be put upon; being a Man of Honor.

SHARPER.

Trick, Sir?

Sir JOSEPH.

Ay, Trick, Sir, and won't be put upon, Sir, being a Man of Honor, Sir, and ſo, Sir——

SHARPER.

Harkee, Sir *Joſeph*, a Word with ye—in Conſideration of ſome Favors lately received; I would not have you draw yourſelf into a Premunire, by truſting to that Sign of a Man there — That Pot-Gun charged with Wind.

Sir JOSEPH.

O Lord, O Lord, Captain, come juſtify yourſelf — I'll give him the Lie if you'll ſtand to it.

SHARPER.

Nay then I'll be beforehand with you, take that—Oaf. [*Cuffs him.*

Sir JOSEPH.

Captain will you ſee this? Won't you pink his Soul?

BLUFFE.

Huſht, 'tis not ſo convenient now — I ſhall find a Time.

SHARPER.

What do you mutter about a Time, Raſcal——You were the Incendiary——

There's

There's to put you in Mind of your Time —A Memorandum. [*Kicks him.*

BLUFFE.

Oh this is your Time, Sir, you had beſt make uſe on't.

SHARPER.

I'Gad and ſo I will: There's again for for you. [*Kicks him.*

BLUFFE.

You are obliging, Sir, but this is too public a Place to thank you in: But in your Ear, you are to be ſeen again.

SHARPER.

Ay, thou inimitable Coward, and to be felt—as for Example. [*Kicks him.*

BELLMOUR.

Ha! ha! ha! prithee come away, 'tis ſcandalous to kick this Puppy unleſs a Man were cold, and had no other Way to get himſelf a Heat.

SCENE IX.

Sir JOSEPH WITTOL, BLUFFE.

BLUFFE.

VERY well—very fine—But 'tis no Matter—Is not this fine, Sir *Joſeph?*

Sir

Sir JOSEPH.

Indifferent, agad in my Opinion very indifferent——I'd rather go plain all my Life, than wear ſuch Finery.

BLUFFE.

Death and Hell, to be affronted thus! I'll die before I'll ſuffer it. [*Draws.*

Sir JOSEPH.

O Lord, his Anger was not raiſed before—nay, dear Captain, don't be in Paſſion now he's gone—Put up, put up, dear Back, 'tis your Sir *Joſeph* begs, come let me kiſs thee; ſo, ſo, put up, put up.

BLUFFE.

By Heav'n 'tis not to be put up.

Sir JOSEPH.

What, Bully?

BLUFFE.

The Affront.

Sir JOSEPH.

No, agad, no more 'tis, for that's put up already; thy Sword I mean.

BLUFFE.

Well, Sir *Joſeph,* at your Intreaty——But were not you, my Friend, abus'd, and cuff'd, and kick'd? [*Putting up his Sword.*

Sir JOSEPH.

Ay, ay, ſo were you too; no Matter, 'tis paſt.

BLUFFE.

BLUFFE.

By the immortal Thunder of great Guns, 'tis falſe—he ſucks not vital Air who dares affirm it to this Face. [*Looks big.*

Sir JOSEPH.

To that Face I grant you Captain—No, no, I grant you—Not to that Face, by the Lord *Harry*—If you had put on your fighting Face before, you had done his Buſineſs—he durſt as ſoon have kiſs'd you, as kick'd you to your Face——But a Man can no more help what's done behind his Back, than what's ſaid—Come, we'll think no more of what's paſt.

BLUFFE.

I'll call a Council of War within to conſider of my Revenge to come.

SCENE X.

SYLVIA's *Apartment.*

HEARTWELL, SYLVIA.

SONG.

As Amoret *and* Thyrſis *lay*
Melting the Hours in gentle Play;
Joining Faces, mingling Kiſſes,
And exchanging harmleſs Bliſſes:

He

He trembling cry'd, with eager Haſte,
O let me feed as well as taſte,
I die, if I'm not wholly bleſs'd.

After the Song, a Dance of Antics.

SYLVIA.

Indeed it is very fine — I could look upon 'em all Day.

HEARTWELL.

Well, has this prevail'd for me, and will you look upon me?

SYLVIA.

If you could ſing and dance ſo, I ſhould love to look upon you too.

HEARTWELL.

Why 'twas I ſung and danc'd; I gave Muſic to the Voice, and Life to their Meaſures — Look you here *Sylvia,* [*Pulling out a Purſe and chinking it.*] here are Songs and Dances, Poetry and Muſic — Hark! how ſweetly one Guinea rhymes to another — and how they dance to the Muſic of their own Chink. This buys all the t'other — and this thou ſhalt have; this, and all that I am worth for the Purchaſe of thy Love — Say, is it mine then, ha? Speak Siren — Oons, why do I look on her! Yet

I muſt—Speak, dear Angel, Devil, Saint, Witch; do not rack me with Suſpence.

SYLVIA.

Nay, don't ſtare at me ſo—You make me bluſh—I cannot look.

HEARTWELL.

Oh Manhood, where art thou? What am I come to? A Woman's Toy; at theſe Years! Death, a bearded Baby for a Girl to dandle. O Dotage, Dotage! That ever that noble Paſſion, *Luſt*, ſhould ebb to this Degree—No Reflux of vigorous Blood: But milky Love ſupplies the empty Channels; and prompts me to the Softneſs of a Child — a mere Infant and would ſuck. Can you love me, *Sylvia?* ſpeak.

SYLVIA.

I dare not ſpeak 'till I believe you, and indeed I'm afraid to believe you yet.

HEARTWELL.

Death, how her Innocence torments and pleaſes me! Lying, Child, is indeed the Art of Love; and Men are generally Maſters in it: But I'm ſo newly entered, you cannot diſtruſt me of any Skill in the treacherous Myſtery—Now, by my Soul, I cannot lie, though it were to ſerve a Friend or gain a Miſtreſs.

SYLVIA.

SYLVIA.

Muſt you lie then, if you ſay you love me?

HEARTWELL.

No, no, dear Ignorance, thou beauteous Changeling — I tell thee I do love thee, and tell it for a Truth, a naked Truth, which I'm aſhamed to diſcover.

SYLVIA.

But Love, they ſay, is a tender Thing, that will ſmooth Frowns, and make calm an angry Face; will ſoften a rugged Temper, and make ill-humored People good: You look ready to fright one, and talk as if your Paſſion were not Love, but Anger.

HEARTWELL.

'Tis both; for I am angry with myſelf when I am pleaſed with you—And a Pox upon me for loving thee ſo well — yet I muſt on—'Tis a bearded Arrow, and will more eaſily be thruſt forward than drawn back.

SYLVIA.

Indeed, if I were well aſſur'd you lov'd; but how can I be well aſſur'd?

HEARTWELL.

Take the Symptoms — and aſk all the Tyrants of thy Sex, if their Fools are not known by this Party-colored Livery — I am

am melancholic, when thou art abſent; look like an Aſs, when thou art preſent; wake for thee, when I ſhould ſleep; and even dream of thee, when I am awake; ſigh much, drink little, eat leſs, court Solitude, am grown very entertaining to myſelf, and (as I am informed) very troubleſome to every Body elſe. If this be not Love, it is Madneſs, and then it is pardonable — Nay, yet a more certain Sign than all this; I give thee my Money.

SYLVIA.

Ay, but that is no Sign; for they ſay, Gentlemen will give Money to any naughty Woman to come to Bed to them — O *Gemini,* I hope you don't mean ſo——for I won't be a Whore.

HEARTWELL.

The more is the Pity. [*Aſide.*

SYLVIA.

Nay, if you would marry me, you ſhould not come to Bed to me — you have ſuch a Beard, and would ſo prickle one. But do you intend to marry me?

HEARTWELL.

That a Fool ſhould aſk ſuch a malicious Queſtion! Death, I ſhall be drawn in, before I know where I am—However, I find I am pretty ſure of her Conſent, if I am put

put to it. [*Aſide.*] Marry you? no, no, I'll love you.

SYLVIA.

Nay, but if you love me, you muſt marry me; what don't I know my Father lov'd my Mother, and was married to her?

HEARTWELL.

Ay, ay, in old Days People married where they lov'd; but that Faſhion is chang'd, Child.

SYLVIA.

Never tell me that, I know it is not chang'd by myſelf; for I love you, and would marry you.

HEARTWELL.

I'll have my Beard ſhav'd, it ſhan't hurt thee, and we'll go to Bed—

SYLVIA.

No, no, I'm not ſuch a Fool neither but I can keep myſelf honeſt;—Here, I won't keep any Thing that's yours, I hate you now, [*Throws the Purſe*] and I'll never ſee you again, 'cauſe you'd have me be naught. [*Going.*

HEARTWELL.

Damn her, let her go, and a good Riddance —— Yet ſo much Tenderneſs and Beauty—and Honeſty together, is a Jewel —Stay, *Sylvia*—But then to marry—Why every

every Man plays the Fool once in his Life: But to marry is playing the Fool all one's Life long.

SYLVIA.

What did you call me for?

HEARTWELL.

I'll give thee all I have: And thou ſhalt live with me in every Thing ſo like my Wife, the World ſhall believe it: Nay, thou ſhalt think ſo thyſelf——Only let me not think ſo.

SYLVIA.

No, I'll die before I'll be your Whore —as well as I love you.

HEARTWELL. [*Aſide.*]

A Woman, and ignorant, may be honeſt, when 'tis out of Obſtinacy and Contradiction—But, 'Sdeath, it is but a May-be, and upon ſcurvy Terms—Well, farewel then—if I can get out of Sight I may get the better of myſelf.

SYLVIA.

Well — good b'ye. [*Turns and weeps.*

HEARTWELL.

Ha! Nay, come, we'll kiſs at parting [*Kiſſes her.*] By Heav'n her Kiſs is ſweeter than Liberty —— I will marry thee —— There thou haſt done't. All my Reſolves are melted in that Kiſs—once more.

SYLVIA.

But when?

HEARTWELL.

I'm impatient 'till it be done; I will not give myſelf Liberty to think, leſt I ſhould cool—I will about a Licence ſtraight —in the Evening expect me—One Kiſs more to confirm me mad; ſo.

SYLVIA.

Ha! ha! ha! an old Fox trapt—

SCENE XI.

[*To her*] LUCY.

BLESS me! you frighted me, I thought he had been come again, and had heard me.

LUCY.

Lord, Madam, I met your Lover in as much Haſte, as if he had been going for a Midwife.

SYLVIA.

He's going for a Parſon, Girl, the Fore-runner of a Midwife, ſome nine Months hence —Well, I find Diſſembling to our Sex is as natural as Swimming to a Negro; we may depend upon our Skill to ſave us at

at a Plunge, tho' till then we never make the Experiment — But how haſt thou ſucceeded?

LUCY.

As you would wiſh —— Since there is no reclaiming *Vainlove*. I have found out a Pique ſhe has taken at him; and have fram'd a Letter that makes her ſue for Reconciliation firſt. I know that will do — walk in and I'll ſhew it you. Come, Madam, you're like to have a happy Time on't, both your Love and Anger ſatisfied! — All that can charm our Sex conſpire to pleaſe you.

That Woman ſure enjoys a bleſſed Night,
Whom Love and Vengeance both at once delight.

End of the Third Act.

ACT IV. SCENE I.

SCENE, *The Street.*

BELLMOUR *in a Fanatic Habit,* SETTER.

BELLMOUR.

'TIS pretty near the Hour. [*Looking on his Watch.*] Well, and how, *Setter,* hæ, does my Hypocriſy fit me, hæ? Does it ſit eaſy on me?

SETTER.

O moſt religiouſly well, Sir.

BELLMOUR.

I wonder why all our young Fellows ſhould glory in an Opinion of Atheiſm; when they may be ſo much more conveniently lewd under the Coverlet of Religion.

SETTER.

'Sbud, Sir, away quickly, there's *Fondlewife* juſt turn'd the Corner, and's coming this Way.

BELLMOUR.

Gads ſo, there he is, he muſt not ſee me.

SCENE

SCENE II.

FONDLEWIFE, BARNABY.

FONDLEWIFE.

I Say, I will tarry at Home.

BARNABY.

But, Sir——

FONDLEWIFE.

Good lack! I profeſs the Spirit of Contradiction hath poſſeſs'd the Lad—I ſay I will tarry at Home —*Varlet*——

BARNABY.

I have done, Sir, then farewel five hundred Pound.

FONDLEWIFE.

Ha, how's that? Stay, ſtay, did you leave Word ſay you with his Wife? With *Comfort* herſelf?

BARNABY.

I did; and *Comfort* will ſend *Tribulation* hither as ſoon as ever he comes home—I could have brought young Mr. *Prig*, to have kept my Miſtreſs Company in the mean Time: But you ſay——

FONDLEWIFE.

How, how, ſay, *Varlet!* I ſay let him not

come near my Doors. I ſay, he is a wanton young *Levite,* and pampereth himſelf up with Dainties, that he may look lovely in the Eyes of Women — Sincerely I am afraid he hath already defiled the Tabernacle of our Siſter *Comfort;* while her good Huſband is deluded by his godly Appearance — I ſay, that even Luſt doth ſparkle in his Eyes, and glow upon his Cheeks, and that I would as ſoon truſt my Wife with a Lord's high-fed Chaplain.

BARNABY.

Sir, the Hour draws nigh—and Nothing will be done there till you come.

FONDLEWIFE.

And Nothing can be done here 'till I go—So that I'll tarry, d'ye ſee.

BARNABY.

And run the Hazard to loſe your Affair, Sir?

FONDLEWIFE.

Good lack, good lack——I profeſs it is a very ſufficient Vexation, for a Man to have a handſome Wife.

BARNABY.

Never, Sir, but when the Man is an inſufficient Huſband. 'Tis then, indeed, like the Vanity of taking a fine Houſe, and yet be forced to let Lodgings, to help pay the Rent.

FON-

FONDLEWIFE.

I profeſs, a very apt Compariſon, *Varlet.* Go and bid my Cocky come out to me, I will give her ſome Inſtructions, I will reaſon with her before I go.

SCENE III.

FONDLEWIFE *alone.*

AND in the mean Time, I will reaſon with myſelf——Tell me *Iſaac,* why art thee jealous? Why art thee diſtruſtful of the Wife of thy Boſom?—Becauſe ſhe is young and vigorous, and I am old and impotent—Then why didſt thee marry, *Iſaac?*——Becauſe ſhe was beautiful and tempting, and becauſe I was obſtinate and doting; ſo that my Inclination was (and is ſtill) greater than my Power——And will not that which tempted thee, alſo tempt others, who will tempt her, *Iſaac?*——I fear it much—— But does not thy Wife love thee, nay, dote upon thee?—Yes—Why then—Ay, but to ſay Truth, ſhe's fonder of me, than ſhe has Reaſon to be; and in the Way of Trade, we ſtill ſuſpect the ſmootheſt Dealers of the deepeſt

Deſigns — And that ſhe has ſome Deſigns deeper than thou canſt reach, th' haſt experimented, *Iſaac* — But Mum.

SCENE IV.

FONDLEWIFE, LAETITIA.

LAETITIA.

I Hope my deareſt Jewel is not going to leave me—are you, *Nykin?*

FONDLEWIFE.

Wife—Have you thoroughly conſider'd how deteſtable, how heinous, and how crying a Sin, the Sin of Adultery is? have you weigh'd it, I ſay? For it is a very weighty Sin; and although it may lie heavy upon thee, yet thy Huſband muſt alſo bear his Part: For thy Iniquity will fall upon his Head.

LAETITIA.

Bleſs me, what means my Dear?

FONDLEWIFE. [*Aſide.*]

I profeſs ſhe has an alluring Eye; I am doubtful whether I ſhall truſt her, even with *Tribulation* himſelf——Speak, I ſay, have you conſidered what it is to cuckold your Huſband?

LAETI-

LAETITIA. [*Aſide.*]

I'm amaz'd: Sure he has diſcovered Nothing——Who has wrong'd me to my Deareſt? I hope my Jewel does not think, that ever I had any ſuch Thing in my Head, or ever will have.

FONDLEWIFE.

No, no, I tell you I ſhall have it in my Head ——

LAETITIA. [*Aſide.*]

I know not what to think. But I'm reſolv'd to find the Meaning of it—Unkind Dear! Was it for this you ſent to call me? is it not Affliction enough that you are to leave me, but you muſt ſtudy to increaſe it by unjuſt Suſpicions? [*Crying.*] Well—Well—You know my Fondneſs, and you love to tyranniſe—Go on, cruel Man, do, triumph over my poor Heart, while it holds; which cannot be long, with this Uſage of yours —— But that's what you want——Well, You will have your Ends ſoon— You will— You will—Yes it will break to oblige you. [*Sighs.*

FONDLEWIFE.

Verily I fear I have carried the Jeſt too far —Nay, look you now if ſhe does not weep — 'tis the fondeſt Fool — Nay.

Cocky,

Cocky, Cocky, nay, dear Cocky, don't cry, I was but in jeſt, I was not i'feck.

LAETITIA. [*Aſide.*]

Oh then all's ſafe. I was terribly frightened — My Affliction is always your Jeſt, barbarous Man! Oh that I ſhould love to this Degree! yet——

FONDLEWIFE.

Nay, Cocky.

LAETITIA.

No, no, you are weary of me, that's it— that's all, you would get another Wife— another fond Fool, to break her Heart — well, be as cruel as you can to me, I'll pray for you; and when I am dead with Grief, may you have one that will love you as well as I have done: I ſhall be contented to lie at Peace in my cold Grave — ſince it will pleaſe you. [*Sighs.*

FONDLEWIFE.

Good lack, good lack, ſhe would melt a Heart of Oak — I profeſs I can hold no longer — Nay dear Cocky — I'feck you'll break my Heart — I'feck you will — See, you have made me weep—made poor *Nykin* weep — Nay, come kiſs, buſs poor *Nykin*—and I won't leave thee—I'll loſe all firſt.

LAETI-

LAETITIA. [*Aſide.*]

How! Heav'n forbid! that will be carrying the Jeſt too far indeed.

FONDLEWIFE.

Won't you kiſs *Nykin?*

LAETITIA.

Go, naughty *Nykin,* you don't love me.

FONDLEWIFE.

Kiſs, kiſs, i'feck I do.

LAETITIA.

No you don't. [*She kiſſes him.*

FONDLEWIFE.

What not love Cocky?

LAETITIA.

No——h. [*Sighs.*

FONDLEWIFE.

I profeſs, I do love thee better than five hundred Pound——and ſo thou ſhalt ſay, for I'll leave it to ſtay with thee.

LAETITIA.

No you ſhan't neglect your Buſineſs for me — No indeed you ſant, *Nykin*— If you don't go, I'll think you been dealous of me ſtill.

FONDLEWIFE.

He! he! he! wilt thou, poor Fool? Then I will go, I won't be dealous—Poor Cocky, kiſs *Nykin,* kiſs *Nykin,* ee, ee, ee —— Here will be the good Man anon, to talk to Cocky

Cocky and teach her how a Wife ought to behave herſelf.

LAETITIA. [*Aſide.*]

I hope to have one who will ſhow me how a Huſband ought to behave himſelf—I ſhall be glad to learn, to pleaſe my Jewel. [*Kiſs.*

FONDLEWIFE.

That's my good Dear—Come kiſs *Nykin* once more, and then get you in — So — Get you in, get you in. By, by.

LAETITIA.

By *Nykin.*

FONDLEWIFE.

By Cocky.

LAETITIA.

By *Nykin.*

FONDLEWIFE.

By Cocky, by, by.

SCENE V.

VAINLOVE, SHARPER.

SHARPER.

HOW! *Araminta* loſt?

VAINLOVE.

To confirm what I have ſaid, read this— [*Gives a Letter.*

SHARPER.

SHARPER, *reads.*

Hum, hum—*And what then appear'd a Fault, upon Reflection, ſeems only an Effect of a too powerful Paſſion. I'm afraid I give too great a Proof of my own at this Time—I am in Diſorder for what I have written. But Something, I know not what, forced me. I only beg a favorable Cenſure of this and your* Araminta.

SHARPER.

Loſt! Pray Heav'n thou haſt not loſt thy Wits. Here, here, ſhe's thy own, Man, ſign'd and ſeal'd too — To her, Man — a delicious Melon pure and conſenting ripe, and only waits thy cutting up — She has been breeding Love to thee all this while, and juſt now ſhe's deliver'd of it.

VAINLOVE.

'Tis an untimely Fruit, and ſhe has miſcarried of her Love.

SHARPER.

Never leave this damn'd, ill-natur'd whimſey, *Frank?* Thou haſt a ſickly peeviſh Appetite; only chew Love and cannot digeſt it.

VAINLOVE.

Yes, when I feed myſelf—But I hate to be cramm'd——By Heav'n, there's not a Woman will give a Man the Pleaſure of a Chaſe: My Sport is always balk'd or cut

cut ſhort——I ſtumble over the Game I would purſue — 'Tis dull and unnatural to have a Hare run full in the Hounds' Mouth; and would diſtaſte the keeneſt Hunter—I would have overtaken, not have met my Game.

SHARPER.

However I hope you don't mean to forſake it; that will be but a kind of a mongrel Cur's Trick. Well, are you for the Mall?

VAINLOVE.

No, ſhe will be there this Evening—— Yes, I will go too —— and ſhe ſhall ſee her Error in ——

SHARPER.

In her Choice, i'Gad——But thou canſt not be ſo great a Brute as to ſlight her.

VAINLOVE.

I ſhould diſappoint her if I did not — By her Management I ſhould think ſhe expects it.

All naturally fly what does purſue:
'Tis fit Men ſhould be coy, when Women woo.

SCENE

SCENE VI.

A Room in FONDLEWIFE's *Houſe.*

A SERVANT *introducing* BELLMOUR *in a Fanatic Habit, with a Patch upon one Eye, and a Book in his Hand.*

SERVANT.

HERE's a Chair, Sir, if you pleaſe to repoſe yourſelf. My Miſtreſs is coming, Sir.

BELLMOUR.

Secure in my Diſguiſe, I have out-fac'd Suſpicion, and even dar'd Diſcovery—— This Cloke my Sanctity, and truſty *Scarron*'s Novels my Prayer Book — Methinks I am the very Picture of *Montufar* in the *Hypocrites*——Oh! ſhe comes.

SCENE VII.

BELLMOUR, LAETITIA.

BELLMOUR.

SO breaks Aurora *through the Veil of Night,*
Thus fly the Clouds, divided by her Light,
And ev'ry Eye receives a new-born Sight.
[*Throwing off his Cloke, Patch,* &c.

LAETI-

LAETITIA.

Thus ſtrow'd with Bluſhes, like—Ah! Heaven defend me! Who's this?

[*Diſcovering him, ſtarts.*

BELLMOUR.

Your Lover.

LAETITIA.

Vainlove's Friend! I know his Face, and he has betray'd me to him. [*Aſide.*

BELLMOUR.

You are ſurpris'd. Did you not expect a Lover, Madam? Thoſe Eyes ſhone kindly on my firſt Appearance, tho' now they are o'ercaſt.

LAETITIA.

I may well be ſurpris'd at your Perſon and Impudence; they are both new to me—You are not what your firſt Appearance promiſed: The Piety of your Habit was welcome, but not the Hypocriſy.

BELLMOUR.

Rather the Hypocriſy was welcome, but not the Hypocrite.

LAETITIA.

Who are you, Sir? You have miſtaken the Houſe ſure.

BELLMOUR.

I have Directions in my Pocket which agree

agree with every Thing but your Unkindneſs. [*Pulls out the Letter.*

LAETITIA.

My Letter! Baſe *Vainlove!* Then 'tis too late to diſſemble. [*Aſide.*] 'Tis plain then you have miſtaken the Perſon. [*Going.*

BELLMOUR.

If we part ſo I'm miſtaken —— Hold, hold, Madam — I confeſs I have run into an Error — I beg your Pardon a thouſand Times — What an eternal Blockhead am I! Can you forgive me the Diſorder I have put you into. — But it is a Miſtake which any Body might have made.

LAETITIA.

What can this mean? 'Tis impoſſible he ſhould be miſtaken after all this—A handſome Fellow if he had not ſurpris'd me: Methinks, now I look on him again, I would not have him miſtaken. [*Aſide.*] We are all liable to Miſtakes, Sir: If you own it to be ſo, there needs no farther Apology.

BELLMOUR.

Nay, 'Faith, Madam, 'tis a pleaſant one, and worth your Hearing. Expecting a Friend, laſt Night, at his Lodgings, 'till 'twas late; my Intimacy with him gave me the Freedom of his Bed: He not

coming Home all Night, a Letter was deliver'd to me by a Servant, in the Morning: Upon the Perusal I found the Contents so charming, that I could think of Nothing all Day, but putting 'em in Practice—'till just now, (the first Time I ever look'd upon the Superscription) I am the most surpris'd in the World to find it directed to Mr. *Vainlove.* Gad, Madam, I ask you a Million of Pardons, and will make you any Satisfaction.

LAETITIA.

I am discover'd—And either *Vainlove* is not guilty, or he has handsomely excus'd him. [*Aside.*

BELLMOUR.

You appear concern'd, Madam.

LAETITIA.

I hope you are a Gentleman;—and since you are privy to a weak Woman's Failing, won't turn it to the Prejudice of her Reputation. You look as if you had more Honor.

BELLMOUR.

And more Love; or my Face is a false Witness, and deserves to be pillory'd.—No, by Heav'n, I swear—

LAETITIA.

Nay, don't swear if you'd have me believe you; but promise— BELL-

BELLMOUR.

Well, I promiſe—A Promiſe is ſo cold —Give me Leave to ſwear—by thoſe Eyes, thoſe killing Eyes; by thoſe healing Lips. —Oh! preſs the ſoft Charm cloſe to mine,—and ſeal 'em up for ever.

LAETITIA.

Upon that Condition. [*He kiſſes her.*

BELLMOUR.

Eternity was in that Moment — One more, upon any Condition.

LAETITIA.

Nay now—I never ſaw any Thing ſo agreeably impudent. [*Aſide.*] Won't you cenſure me for this, now?—but 'tis to buy your Silence. [*Kiſs.*] Oh, but what am I doing?

BELLMOUR.

Doing! No Tongue can expreſs it — not thy own; nor any Thing, but thy Lips. I am faint with Exceſs of Bliſs: —Oh, for Love's ſake, lead me any whither, where I may lie down; — quickly, for I'm afraid I ſhall have a Fit.

LAETITIA.

Bleſs me! What Fit?

BELLMOUR.

Oh, a Convulſion—I feel the Symptoms.

LAETITIA.

Does it hold you long? I'm afraid to carry you into my Chamber.

BELLMOUR.

Oh, no: Let me lie down upon the Bed;—the Fit will be ſoon over.

SCENE VIII.

SCENE, *St.* James's Park.

ARAMINTA *and* BELINDA *meeting.*

BELINDA.

LARD, my Dear: I am glad I have met you —— I have been at the *Exchange* ſince, and am ſo tir'd —

ARAMINTA.

Why, what's the Matter?

BELINDA.

Oh the moſt inhuman, barbarous Hackney-Coach! I am jolted to a Jelly — Am I not horridly touz'd?

[*Pulls out a Pocket Glaſs.*

ARAMINTA.

Your Head's a little out of Order.

BELINDA.

A little! O frightful! What a furious Phyz I have! O moſt rueful! Ha! ha! ha!

O

O Gad, I hope no Body will come this Way, 'till I have put myſelf a little in Repair—Ah! my Dear—I have ſeen ſuch unhewn Creatures ſince—Ha! ha! ha! I can't for my Soul help thinking that I look juſt like one of 'em—Good Dear, pin this, and I'll tell you—Very well—So, thank you my Dear—But as I was telling you—Piſh, this is the untoward'ſt Lock—So, as I was telling you—How d'ye like me now? Hideous, ha? Frightful ſtill? Or how?

ARAMINTA.

No, no; you're very well as can be.

BELINDA.

And ſo—But where did I leave off, my Dear? I was telling you—

ARAMINTA.

You were about to tell me Something, Child—but you left off before you began.

BELINDA.

Oh; a moſt comical Sight: A Country Squire, with the Equipage of a Wife and two Daughters, came to Mrs. *Snipwell*'s Shop while I was there—But, oh Gad! Two ſuch unlick'd Cubs!

ARAMINTA.

I warrant, plump, cherry-cheek'd Country Girls.

BELINDA.

Ay, o' my Conſcience, fat as Barn-Door Fowl: But ſo bedeck'd, you would have taken 'em for *Friezland* Hens, with their Feathers growing the wrong Way——O ſuch Out-landiſh Creatures! Such *Tramontanæ,* and Foreigners to the Faſhion, or any Thing in Practice! I had not Patience to behold—I undertook the modelling of one of their Fronts, the more modern Structure—

ARAMINTA.

Bleſs me, Couſin; why would you affront any Body ſo? They might be Gentlewomen of a very good Family—

BELINDA.

Of a very ancient one, I dare ſwear, by their Dreſs—Affront! Pſhaw, how you're miſtaken! The poor Creature, I warrant, was as full of Curtſies, as if I had been her Godmother: The Truth on't is, I did endeavour to make her look like a Chriſtian—and ſhe was ſenſible of it; for ſhe thank'd me, and gave me two Apples, piping hot, out of her Under-Petticoat Pocket—Ha! ha! ha! And t'other did ſo ſtare and gape—I fancied her like the Front of her Father's Hall; her Eyes were the two Jut-Windows, and her Mouth the great

great Door, moſt hoſpitably kept open, for the Entertainment of travelling Flies.

ARAMINTA.

So then; you have been diverted. What did they buy?

BELINDA.

Why, the Father bought a Powder-Horn, and an Almanac, and a Comb-Caſe; the Mother, a great Fruz-Tower, and a fat Amber-Necklace; the Daughters only tore two Pair of Kid-leather Gloves, with trying 'em on—Oh Gad, here comes the Fool that din'd at my Lady *Freelove*'s t'other Day.

SCENE IX.

[*To them*] *Sir* JOSEPH *and* BLUFFE.

ARAMINTA.

MAY be he may not know us again.

BELINDA.

We'll put on our Maſks to ſecure his Ignorance. [*They put on their Maſks.*

Sir JOSEPH.

Nay, Gad, I'll pick up; I'm reſolv'd to make a Night on't—I'll go to Alderman *Fondlewife* by and by, and get fifty Pieces

more from him. Adſlidikins, Bully, we'll wallow in Wine and Women. Why, this ſame *Madeira* Wine has made me as light as a Graſhopper — Hiſt, hiſt, Bully, doſt thou ſee thoſe Tearers? [*Sings.*] *Look you what here is — Look you what here is———— Toll—loll—dera—toll—loll*—A Gad, t'other Glaſs of *Madeira*, and I durſt have attack'd 'em in my own proper Perſon, without your Help.

BLUFFE.

Come on then, Knight — But d'ye know what to ſay to 'em?

Sir JOSEPH.

Say! Pooh, Pox, I've enough to ſay — never fear it — that is, if I can but think on't: Truth is, I have but a treacherous Memory.

BELINDA.

O frightful! Couſin, What ſhall we do? Theſe Things come towards us.

ARAMINTA.

No Matter — I ſee *Vainlove* coming this Way — and, to confeſs my Failing, I am willing to give him an Opportunity of making his Peace with me—and to rid me of theſe Coxcombs, when I ſeem oppreſs'd with 'em, will be a fair one.

BLUFFE.

BLUFFE.

Ladies, by theſe Hilts you are well met.

ARAMINTA.

We are afraid not.

BLUFFE.

What ſays my pretty little Knapſack Carrier. [*To* Belinda.

BELINDA.

O monſtrous filthy Fellow! Good ſlovenly Captain *Huffe, Bluffe,* (what is your hideous Name?) be gone: You ſtink of Brandy and Tobacco, moſt Soldier-like. Foh. [*Spits.*

Sir JOSEPH.

Now am I flap-daſh down in the Mouth, and have not one Word to ſay! [*Aſide.*

ARAMINTA.

I hope my Fool has not Confidence enough to be troubleſome. [*Aſide.*

Sir JOSEPH.

Hem! Pray, Madam, which Way's the Wind?

ARAMINTA.

A pithy Queſtion—Have you ſent your Wits for a Venture, Sir, that you enquire?

Sir JOSEPH.

Nay, now I'm in—I can prattle like a Magpie. [*Aſide.*

SCENE

SCENE X.

[*To them*] SHARPER, *and* VAINLOVE *at ſome Diſtance.*

BELINDA.

DEAR *Araminta,* I'm tir'd.

ARAMINTA.

'Tis but pulling off our Maſks, and obliging *Vainlove* to know us. I'll be rid of my Fool by fair Means—Well, Sir *Joſeph,* you ſhall ſee my Face—but, be gone immediately—I ſee one that will be jealous, to find me in Diſcourſe with you——Be diſcreet—No Reply; but away. [*Unmaſks.*

Sir JOSEPH.

The great Fortune that dined at my Lady *Freelove*'s! Sir *Joſeph,* thou art a made Man. Agad, I'm in Love up to the Ears. But I'll be diſcreet, and huſht. [*Aſide.*

BLUFFE.

Nay, by the World, I'll ſee your Face.

BELINDA.

You ſhall. [*Unmaſks.*

SHARPER.

Ladies, your humble Servant——We were afraid you would not have given us Leave to know you. ARA-

ARAMINTA.

We thought to have been private—— But we find Fools have the ſame Advantage over a Face in a Maſk, that a Coward has, while the Sword is in the Scabbard — So were forced to draw in our own Defence.

BLUFFE.

My Blood riſes at that Fellow: I can't ſtay where he is; and I muſt not draw in the Park. [*To Sir* Joſeph.

Sir JOSEPH.

I wiſh I durſt ſtay to let her know my Lodging.

SCENE XI.

ARAMINTA, BELINDA, VAINLOVE, *and* SHARPER.

SHARPER.

THERE is in true Beauty, as in Courage, ſomewhat, which narrow Souls cannot dare to admire—And ſee, the Owls are fled, as at the Break of Day.

BELINDA.

Very courtly — I believe, Mr. *Vainlove* has not rubb'd his Eyes ſince Break of Day

Day neither, he looks as if he durſt not approach—Nay, come Couſin, be Friends with him — I ſwear he looks ſo very ſimply, ha! ha! ha!——Well, a Lover in the State of Separation from his Miſtreſs, is like a Body without a Soul. Mr. *Vainlove,* ſhall I be bound for your good Behaviour for the future?

VAINLOVE.

Now muſt I pretend Ignorance equal to hers, of what ſhe knows as well as I. [*Aſide.*] Men are apt to offend ('tis true) where they find moſt Goodneſs to forgive —But, Madam, I hope I ſhall prove of a Temper, not to abuſe Mercy, by committing new Offences.

ARAMINTA.

So cold! [*Aſide.*

BELINDA.

I have broke the Ice for you, Mr. *Vainlove,* and ſo I leave you. Come, Mr. *Sharper,* you and I will take a Turn, and laugh at the Vulgar—Both the great Vulgar and the ſmall——Oh Gad! I have a great Paſſion for *Cowley*—Don't you admire him?

SHARPER.

Oh Madam! He was our *Engliſh Horace.*

BELINDA.

BELINDA.

Ah ſo fine! So extremely fine! So every Thing in the World that I like—Oh Lord, walk this Way—I ſee a Couple, I'll give you their Hiſtory.

SCENE XII.

ARAMINTA, VAINLOVE.

VAINLOVE.

I Find, Madam, the Formality of the Law muſt be obſerv'd, tho' the Penalty of it be diſpens'd with; and an Offender muſt plead to his Arraignment, though he has his Pardon in his Pocket.

ARAMINTA.

I'm amaz'd! This Inſolence exceeds t'other;—whoever has encourag'd you to this Aſſurance—preſuming upon the Eaſineſs of my Temper, has much deceiv'd you, and ſo you ſhall find.

VAINLOVE.

Hey-day! Which Way now? Here's fine Doubling. [*Aſide.*

ARAMINTA.

Baſe Man! Was it not enough to affront me with your ſaucy Paſſion?

VAIN-

VAINLOVE.

You have given that Paſſion a much kinder Epithet than ſaucy, in another Place.

ARAMINTA.

Another Place! Some villainous Deſign to blaſt my Honor—But tho' thou hadſt all the Treachery and Malice of thy Sex, thou canſt not lay a Blemiſh on my Fame —No, I have not err'd in one favorable Thought of Mankind—How Time might have deceiv'd me in you, I know not; my Opinion was but young, and your early Baſeneſs has prevented its growing to a wrong Belief—Unworthy, and ungrateful! Be gone, and never ſee me more.

VAINLOVE.

Did I dream? Or do I dream? Shall I believe my Eyes, or Ears? The Viſion is here ſtill—Your Paſſion, Madam, will admit of no farther Reaſoning—But here's a ſilent Witneſs of your Acquaintance.

[*Takes out the Letter, and offers it: She ſnatches it, and throws it away.*

ARAMINTA.

There's Poiſon in every Thing you touch —Bliſters will follow——

VAINLOVE.

That Tongue which denies what the Hands have done. ARA-

ARAMINTA.

Still myſtically ſenſeleſs and impudent—I find I muſt leave the Place.

VAINLOVE.

No, Madam, I'm gone—She knows her Name's to it, which ſhe will be unwilling to expoſe to the Cenſure of the firſt Finder.

ARAMINTA.

Woman's Obſtinacy made me blind, to what Woman's Curioſity now tempts me to ſee. [*Takes up the Letter.*

SCENE XIII.

BELINDA, SHARPER.

BELINDA.

NAY, we have ſpared no Body, I ſwear. Mr. *Sharper*, you're a pure Man; where did you get this excellent Talent of Railing?

SHARPER.

Faith, Madam, the Talent was born with me:—I confeſs, I have taken Care to improve it; to qualify me for the Society of Ladies.

BELINDA.

Nay, ſure Railing is the beſt Qualification in a Woman's Man.

SCENE

SCENE XIV.

[*To them*] FOOTMAN.

SHARPER.

THE ſecond beſt— indeed I think.

BELINDA.

How now, *Pace?* Where's my Couſin?

FOOTMAN.

She's not very well, Madam, and has ſent to know, if your Ladyſhip would have the Coach come again for you?

BELINDA.

O Lord, no, I'll go along with her. Come, Mr. *Sharper.*

SCENE XV.

SCENE, *A Chamber in* Fondlewife's *Houſe.*

LAETITIA *and* BELLMOUR, *his Cloke, Hat,* &c. *lying looſe about the Chamber.*

BELLMOUR.

HERE's no Body, nor no Noiſe —— 'twas Nothing but your Fears.

LAETITIA.

LAETITIA.

I durſt have ſworn I heard my Monſter's Voice——I ſwear, I was heartily frightened—Feel how my Heart beats.

BELLMOUR.

'Tis an Alarm to Love—Come in again, and let us—

FONDLEWIFE. [*Without.*]

Cocky, Cocky, where are you, Cocky? I'm come home.

LAETITIA.

Ah! There he is. Make Haſte, gather up your Things.

FONDLEWIFE.

Cocky, Cocky, open the Door.

BELLMOUR.

Pox choke him, would his Horns were in his Throat. My Patch, my Patch.

[*Looking about, and gathering up his Things.*

LAETITIA.

My Jewel, art thou there? No Matter for your Patch—You s'an't tum in, *Nykin*—Run into my Chamber, quickly, quickly. You s'an't tum in.

FONDLEWIFE.

Nay, prithee, Dear, i'feck I'm in Haſte.

LAETITIA.

Then I'll let you in. [*Opens the Door.*

SCENE XVI.

LAETITIA, FONDLEWIFE, *Sir* JOSEPH WITTOLL.

FONDLEWIFE.

KISS, Dear—I met the Maſter of the Ship by the Way—And I muſt have my Papers of Accounts out of your Cabinet.

LAETITIA.

Oh, I'm undone! [*Aſide.*

Sir JOSEPH.

Pray, firſt let me have fifty Pounds, good Alderman, for I'm in Haſte.

FONDLEWIFE.

A Hundred has already been paid, by your Order. Fifty? I have the Sum ready in Gold, in my Cloſet.

SCENE XVII.

LAETITIA, *Sir* JOSEPH WITTOLL.

Sir JOSEPH.

AGAD, it's a curious, fine, pretty Rogue; I'll ſpeak to her—Pray, Madam, what News d'ye hear?

LAETI-

LAETITIA.

Sir, I ſeldom ſtir abroad.

[*Walks about in Diſorder.*

Sir JOSEPH.

I wonder at that, Madam, for 'tis moſt curious fine Weather.

LAETITIA.

Methinks 't has been very ill Weather.

Sir JOSEPH.

As you ſay, Madam, 'tis pretty bad Weather, and has been ſo a great While.

SCENE XVIII.

[*To them*] FONDLEWIFE.

FONDLEWIFE.

HERE are fifty Pieces in this Purſe, Sir *Joſeph*—If you will tarry a Moment, 'till I fetch my Papers, I'll wait upon you down Stairs.

LAETITIA.

Ruin'd, paſt Redemption! What ſhall I do—Ha! this Fool may be of Uſe. [*Aſide.*] [*As* Fondlewife *is going into the Chamber, ſhe runs to Sir* Joſeph, *almoſt puſhes him down, and cries out.*] Stand off, rude Ruffian. Help

me, my Dear — O bleſs me! Why will you leave me alone with ſuch a Satyr.

FONDLEWIFE.

Bleſs us! What's the Matter? What's the Matter?

LAETITIA.

Your Back was no ſooner turn'd; but like a Lion, he came open mouth'd upon me, and would have raviſhed a Kiſs from me by main Force.

Sir JOSEPH.

O Lord! Oh terrible! Ha! ha! ha! is your Wife mad, Alderman?

LAETITIA.

Oh! I'm ſick with the Fright; won't you take him out of my Sight?

FONDLEWIFE.

Oh Traitor! I'm aſtoniſhed. Oh bloody-minded Traitor!

Sir JOSEPH.

Hey-day! Traitor yourſelf——By the Lord *Harry,* I was in moſt Danger of being raviſh'd, if you go to that.

FONDLEWIFE.

Oh, how the blaſphemous Wretch ſwears! Out of my Houſe, thou Son of the Whore of *Babylon;* Offspring of *Bell* and the *Dragon* — Bleſs us! Raviſh my Wife! my *Dinah!* Oh *Shechemite!* Be gone I ſay.

Sir

Sir JOSEPH.

Why, the Devil's in the People, I think.

SCENE XIX.

LAETITIA, FONDLEWIFE.

LAETITIA.

OH! won't you follow, and ſee him out of Doors, my Dear?

FONDLEWIFE.

I'll ſhut this Door, to ſecure him from coming back — Give me the Key of your Cabinet, Cocky — Raviſh my Wife before my Face! I warrant he's a Papiſt in his Heart, at leaſt, if not a *Frenchman*.

LAETITIA.

What can I do now? [*Aſide.*] Oh! my Dear, I have been in ſuch a Fright, that I forgot to tell you, poor Mr. *Spintext* has a ſad Fit of the Cholic, and is forced to lie down upon our Bed — You'll diſturb him; I can tread ſoftlier.

FONDLEWIFE.

Alack poor Man — no, no — you don't know the Papers — I won't diſturb him; give me the Key.

[*She gives him the Key, goes to the Chamber Door, and ſpeaks aloud.*

LAETITIA.

'Tis no Body but Mr. *Fondlewife*, Mr. *Spintext*, lie ſtill on your Stomach; lying on your Stomach, will eaſe you of the Cholic.

FONDLEWIFE.

Ay, ay, lie ſtill, lie ſtill; don't let me diſturb you.

SCENE XX.

LAETITIA *alone.*

LAETITIA.

SURE, when he does not ſee his Face, he won't diſcover him. Dear Fortune, help me but this once, and I'll never run into thy Debt again—But this Opportunity is the Devil.

SCENE XXI.

FONDLEWIFE *returns with Papers.*

FONDLEWIFE.

GOOD lack! good lack!—I profeſs, the poor Man is in great Torment, he

he lies as flat——Dear, you ſhould heat a Trencher, or a Napkin—Where's *Deborah?* Let her clap ſome warm Thing to his Stomach, or chafe it with a warm Hand, rather than fail. What Book's this?

[*Sees the Book that* Bellmour *forgot.*

LAETITIA.

Mr. *Spintext*'s Prayer Book, Dear—Pray Heav'n it be a Prayer Book. [*Aſide.*

FONDLEWIFE.

Good Man! I warrant he dropped it on Purpoſe, that you might take it up, and read ſome of the pious Ejaculations [*Taking up the Book*] O bleſs me! O monſtrous! A Prayer Book! Ay, this is the Devil's *Pater-Noſter*. Hold, let me ſee; *The Innocent Adultery.*

LAETITIA.

Misfortune! now all's ruin'd again. [*Aſide.*

BELLMOUR. [*Peeping.*]

Damn'd Chance! If I had gone a whoring with the *Practice of Piety* in my Pocket, I had never been diſcover'd.

FONDLEWIFE.

Adultery, and innocent! O Lord! Here's Doctrine! Ay, here's Diſcipline!

LAETITIA.

Dear Huſband, I'm amaz'd: — Sure it

is a good Book, and only tends to the Speculation of Sin.

FONDLEWIFE.

Speculation! No, no; Something went farther than Speculation when I was not to be let in——Where is this Apocryphal Elder? I'll ferret him.

LAETITIA.

I'm ſo diſtracted, I can't think of a Lie. [*Aſide.*

SCENE XXII.

LAETITIA, *and* FONDLEWIFE *haling out* BELLMOUR.

FONDLEWIFE.

COME out here, thou *Ananias* incarnate——Who, how now! Who have we here?

LAETITIA.

Ha! [*Shrieks, as ſurpris'd.*

FONDLEWIFE.

Oh, thou ſalacious Woman! Am I then brutified? Ay, I feel it here; I ſprout, I bud, I bloſſom, I am ripe-horn-mad. But who in the Devil's Name are you? Mercy on me for ſwearing. But—

LAETI-

LAETITIA.

Oh, Goodneſs keep us! Who's this? Who are you? What are you?

BELLMOUR.

Soh.

LAETITIA.

In the Name of the——O! Good, my my Dear, don't come near it, I'm afraid 'tis the Devil; indeed it has Hoofs, Dear.

FONDLEWIFE.

Indeed, and I have Horns, Dear. The Devil! no, I am afraid, 'tis the Fleſh, thou Harlot. Dear, with the Pox! Come *Siren,* ſpeak, confeſs, who is this reverend, brawny Paſtor?

LAETITIA.

Indeed, and indeed now my Dear *Nykin* ——I never ſaw this wicked Man before.

FONDLEWIFE.

Oh, it is a Man then, it ſeems.

LAETITIA.

Rather, ſure it is a Wolf in the cloathing of a Sheep.

FONDLEWIFE.

Thou art a Devil in his proper Cloathing, Woman's Fleſh. What, you know Nothing of him, but his Fleece here?—— You don't love Mutton?—you *Magdalen* unconverted.

BELL-

BELLMOUR.

Well, now I know my Cue — That is, very honorably to excuſe her, and very impudently accuſe myſelf. [*Aſide.*

LAETITIA.

Why then, I wiſh I may never enter into the Heav'n of your Embraces again, my Dear, if ever I ſaw his Face before.

FONDLEWIFE.

O Lord! O ſtrange! I am in Admiration of your Impudence. Look at him a little better; he is more modeſt, I warrant you, than to deny it. Come, were you two never Face to Face before? Speak.

BELLMOUR.

Since all Artifice is vain—And I think myſelf obliged to ſpeak the Truth in Juſtice to your Wife——No.

FONDLEWIFE.

Humph.

LAETITIA.

No, indeed Dear.

FONDLEWIFE.

Nay, I find you are both in a Story; that I muſt confeſs. But, what — not to be cured of the Cholic? Don't you know your Patient, Mrs. *Quack?* Oh, lie upon your Stomach; lying upon your Stomach will cure you of the Cholic. Ah! anſwer me, *Jezebel?* LAETI-

LAETITIA.

Let the wicked Man anſwer for himſelf; does he think that I have Nothing to do but excuſe him; 'tis enough, if I can clear my own Innocence to my own Dear.

BELLMOUR.

By my Troth, and ſo 'tis —— I have been a little too backward, that's the Truth on't.

FONDLEWIFE.

Come, Sir, who are you, in the firſt Place? And what are you?

BELLMOUR.

A Whoremaſter.

FONDLEWIFE.

Very conciſe.

LAETITIA.

O beaſtly, impudent Creature!

FONDLEWIFE.

Well Sir, and what came you hither for?

BELLMOUR.

To lie with your Wife.

FONDLEWIFE.

Good again—A very civil Perſon this, and I believe ſpeaks Truth.

LAETITIA.

Oh, inſupportable Impudence!

FONDLEWIFE.

Well Sir,—Pray be cover'd —and you have

have—Heh! You have finiſh'd the Matter, heh? And I am, as I ſhould be, a Sort of a civil Perquiſite to a Whoremaſter, call'd a *Cuckold,* heh? Is it not ſo? Come, I'm inclining to believe every Word you ſay.

BELLMOUR.

Why, faith, I muſt confeſs, ſo I deſign'd you——But, you were a little unlucky in coming ſo ſoon, and hindered the making of your own Fortune.

FONDLEWIFE.

Humph. Nay, if you mince the Matter once, and go back of your Word; you are not the Perſon I took you for. Come, come, go on boldly—What, don't be aſham'd of your Profeſſion—Confeſs, confeſs, I ſhall love thee the better for't—I ſhall i'feck—What, doſt think I don't know how to behave my ſelf in the Employment of a Cuckold, and have been three Years Apprentice to Matrimony? Come, come, Plain-dealing is a Jewel.

BELLMOUR.

Well, ſince I ſee thou art a good honeſt Fellow, I'll confeſs the whole Matter to thee.

FONDLEWIFE.

Oh, I am a very honeſt Fellow — you never lay with an honeſter Man's Wife in your Life.

LAETI-

LAETITIA.

How my Heart aches! All my Comfort lies in his Impudence, and, Heaven be prais'd, he has a conſiderable Portion.

[*Aſide.*

BELLMOUR.

In ſhort then, I was inform'd of the Opportunity of your Abſence, by my Spy, (for, faith, honeſt *Iſaac*, I have a long Time deſign'd thee this Favor) I knew *Spintext* was to come by your Direction.——But I laid a Trap for him, and procur'd his Habit; in which, I paſs'd upon your Servants, and was conducted hither. I pretended a Fit of the Cholic, to excuſe my lying down upon your Bed; hoping that when ſhe heard of it, her Good-nature would bring her to adminiſter Remedies for my Diſtemper. —— You know what might have follow'd. —— But like an uncivil Perſon, you knock'd at the Door, before your Wife was come to me.

FONDLEWIFE.

Ha! This is Apocryphal; I may chooſe whether I will believe it or no.

BELLMOUR.

That you may, faith, and I hope you won't believe a Word on't——But I can't help telling the Truth, for my Life.

FONDLE-

FONDLEWIFE.

How! wou'd not you have me believe you, ſay you?

BELLMOUR.

No; for then you muſt of conſequence part with your Wife, and there will be ſome Hopes of having her upon the Public; then the Encouragement of a ſeparate Maintenance——

FONDLEWIFE.

No, no; for that Matter,——when ſhe and I part, ſhe'll carry her ſeparate Maintenance about her.

LAETITIA.

Ah, cruel Dear, how can you be ſo barbarous? You'll break my Heart, if you talk of parting. [*Cries.*

FONDLEWIFE.

Ah, diſſembling Vermin!

BELLMOUR.

How canſt thou be ſo cruel, *Iſaac?* Thou haſt the Heart of a Mountain-Tiger. By the Faith of a ſincere Sinner, ſhe's innocent for me. Go to him, Madam, fling your ſnowy Arms about his ſtubborn Neck; bathe his relentleſs Face in your ſalt trickling Tears ——

[*She goes and hangs upon his Neck, and kiſſes him.* Bellmour *kiſſes her Hand behind* Fondlewife's *Back.* So,

So, a few ſoft Words and a Kiſs, and the good Man melts. See how kind Nature works, and boils over in him.

LAETITIA.

Indeed, my Dear, I was but juſt come down Stairs, when you knock'd at the Door; and the Maid told me Mr. *Spintext* was ill of the Cholic, upon our Bed. And won't you ſpeak to me, cruel *Nykin?* Indeed I'll die if you don't.

FONDLEWIFE.

Ah! No, no, I cannot ſpeak, my Heart's ſo full—I have been a tender Huſband, a tender Yoke-Fellow; you know I have—But thou haſt been a faithleſs *Dalilah,* and the *Philiſtines*—Heh! Art thou not vile and unclean, Heh? Speak. [*Weeping.*

LAETITIA.

No—h. [*Sighing.*

FONDLEWIFE.

Oh, that I could believe thee!

LAETITIA.

Oh, my Heart will break. [*Seeming to faint.*

FONDLEWIFE.

Heh! how! No, ſtay, ſtay, I will believe thee, I will. —— Pray bend her forward, Sir.

LAETITIA.

Oh! oh! Where is my Dear?

FONDLE-

FONDLEWIFE.

Here, here; I do believe thee.—I won't believe my own Eyes.

BELLMOUR.

For my Part, I am ſo charm'd with the Love of your Turtle to you, that I'll go and ſolicit Matrimony with all my Might and Main.

FONDLEWIFE.

Well, well, Sir; as long as I believe it, 'tis well enough. No Thanks to you, Sir, for her Virtue.—But, I'll ſhow you the Way out of my Houſe, if you pleaſe. Come, my Dear. Nay, I will believe thee, I do, i'feck.

BELLMOUR.

See the great Bleſſing of an eaſy Faith; Opinion cannot err.

No Huſband, by his Wife can be deceiv'd;
She ſtill is virtuous, if ſhe's ſo believ'd.

End of the Fourth Act.

ACT

ACT V. SCENE I.

SCENE, *The Street.*

BELLMOUR *in a Fanatic Habit,* SETTER, HEARTWELL, LUCY.

BELLMOUR.

SETTER! Well encounter'd.

SETTER.

Joy of your Return, Sir. Have you made a good Voyage? or have you brought your own Lading back?

BELLMOUR.

No, I have brought Nothing but Ballaſt back—made a delicious Voyage, *Setter;* and might have rode at Anchor in the Port 'till this Time, but the Enemy ſurpris'd us—I would unrig.

SETTER.

I attend you, Sir.

BELLMOUR.

Ha! is not that *Heartwell* at *Sylvia*'s Door? Be gone quickly, I'll follow you:—I would not be known. Pox take 'em, they ſtand juſt in my Way.

SCENE II.

BELLMOUR, HEARTWELL, LUCY.

HEARTWELL.

I'M impatient 'till it be done.

LUCY.

That may be, without troubling yourſelf to go again for your Brother's Chaplain. Don't you ſee that ſtalking Form of Godlineſs?

HEARTWELL.

O ay; he's a Fanatic.

LUCY.

An Executioner qualified to do your Buſineſs. He has been lawfully ordain'd.

HEARTWELL.

I'll pay him well, if you'll break the Matter to him.

LUCY.

I warrant you—Do you go and prepare your Bride.

SCENE

SCENE III.

BELLMOUR, LUCY.

BELLMOUR.

HUmph, ſits the Wind there?—What a lucky Rogue am I! Oh, what Sport will be here, if I can perſuade this Wench to Secreſy.

LUCY.

Sir: Reverend Sir.

BELLMOUR.

Madam. [*Diſcovers himſelf.*

LUCY.

Now, Goodneſs have Mercy upon me! Mr. *Bellmour!* is it you?

BELLMOUR.

Even I. What doſt think?

LUCY.

Think! That I ſhould not believe my Eyes, and that you are not what you ſeem to be.

BELLMOUR.

True. But to convince thee who I am, thou know'ſt my old Token. [*Kiſſes her.*

LUCY.

Nay, Mr. *Bellmour:* O Lard! I believe you are a Parſon in good earneſt, you kiſs ſo devoutly.

BELLMOUR.

Well, your Buſineſs with me, *Lucy?*

LUCY.

I had none, but through Miſtake.

BELLMOUR.

Which Miſtake you muſt go thorough with, *Lucy* — Come, I know the Intrigue between *Heartwell* and your Miſtreſs; and you miſtook me for *Tribulation Spintext,* to marry 'em———Ha? Are not Matters in this Poſture? — Confeſs: — Come, I'll be faithful; I will i'faith. — What, diffide in me, *Lucy?*

LUCY.

Alas-a-day! You and Mr. *Vainlove,* between you, have ruin'd my poor Miſtreſs: You have made a Gap in her Reputation; and can you blame her if ſhe make it up with a Huſband?

BELLMOUR.

Well, is it as I ſay?

LUCY.

Well, it is then: But you'll be ſecret?

BELLMOUR.

Phuh, Secret, ay: — And to be out of thy Debt, I'll truſt thee with another Secret. Your Miſtreſs muſt not marry *Heartwell, Lucy.*

LUCY.

LUCY.

How! O Lord! ——

BELLMOUR.

Nay, don't be in Paſſion, *Lucy:* — I'll provide a fitter Huſband for her.—Come, here's Earneſt of my good Intentions for thee too; let this mollify. —— [*Gives her Money.*] Look you, *Heartwell* is my Friend; and tho' he be blind, I muſt not ſee him fall into the Snare, and unwittingly marry a Whore.

LUCY.

Whore! I'd have you to know my Miſtreſs ſcorns ——

BELLMOUR.

Nay, nay: Look you, *Lucy;* there are Whores of as good Quality. — But to the Purpoſe, if you will give me Leave to acquaint you with it.—Do you carry on the Miſtake of me: I'll marry 'em. ——Nay, don't pauſe;—If you do, I'll ſpoil all.—I have ſome private Reaſons for what I do, which I'll tell you within. — In the mean time, I promiſe, — and rely upon me, — to help your Miſtreſs to a Huſband: Nay, and thee too, *Lucy.* — Here's my Hand, I will; with a freſh Aſſurance.

[*Gives her more Money.*

LUCY.

Ah, the Devil is not ſo cunning.—You know my eaſy Nature. — Well, for once I'll venture to ſerve you; but, if you do deceive me, the Curſe of all kind, tender-hearted Women light upon you.

BELLMOUR.

That's as much as to ſay, *The Pox take me.* — Well, lead on.

SCENE IV.

VAINLOVE, SHARPER, *and* SETTER.

SHARPER.

JUST now, ſay you, gone in with *Lucy?*

SETTER.

I ſaw him, Sir, and ſtood at the Corner where you found me, and overheard all they ſaid: Mr. *Bellmour* is to marry 'em.

SHARPER.

Ha! ha! 'twill be a pleaſant Cheat, — I'll plague *Heartwell* when I ſee him. Prithee, *Frank,* let's teaze him; make him fret 'till he foam at the Mouth, and diſgorge his Matrimonial Oath with Intereſt —— Come, thou'rt muſty ——

SET-

SETTER.

[*To* Sharper.] Sir, a Word with you.

[*Whiſpers him.*

VAINLOVE.

Sharper ſwears ſhe has forſworn the Letter—I'm ſure he tells me Truth;—but I am not ſure ſhe told him Truth: — Yet ſhe was unaffectedly concern'd, he ſays; and often bluſh'd with Anger and Surpriſe:—And ſo I remember in the Park.—She had Reaſon, if I wrong her—I begin to doubt.

SHARPER.

Say'ſt thou ſo?

SETTER.

This Afternoon, Sir, about an Hour before my Maſter receiv'd the Letter.

SHARPER.

In my Conſcience, like enough.

SETTER.

Ay, I know her, Sir; at leaſt, I'm ſure I can fiſh it out of her: She's the very Sluice to her Lady's Secrets:——'Tis but ſetting her Mill a going, and I can drain her of 'em all.

SHARPER.

Here, *Frank*, your Blood-Hound has made out the Fault: This Letter, that ſo ſticks in thy Maw, is counterfeit; only a

Trick of *Sylvia* in Revenge, contriv'd by *Lucy*.

VAINLOVE.

Ha! It has a Color — But how do you know it, Sirrah?

SETTER.

I do ſuſpect as much; — becauſe why, Sir,——She was pumping me about how your Worſhip's Affairs ſtood towards Madam *Araminta;* as, when you had ſeen her laſt? when you were to ſee her next? and, where you were to be found at that Time? and ſuch like.

VAINLOVE.

And where did you tell her?

SETTER.

In the *Piazza.*

VAINLOVE.

There I receiv'd the Letter—It muſt be ſo—And why did you not find me out, to tell me this before, Sot?

SETTER.

Sir, I was Pimping for Mr. *Bellmour.*

SHARPER.

You were well employ'd:—I think there is no Objection to the Excuſe.

VAINLOVE.

Pox o'my ſaucy Credulity——If I have loſt her, I deſerve it. But if Confeſſion and Repent-

Repentance be of Force, I'll win her, or weary her into a Forgiveneſs.

SHARPER.

Methinks I long to ſee *Bellmour* come forth.

SCENE V.

SHARPER, BELLMOUR, SETTER.

SETTER.

TALK of the Devil——See where he comes.

SHARPER.

Hugging himſelf in his proſperous Miſchief——No real Fanatic can look better pleas'd after a ſucceſsful Sermon of Sedition.

BELLMOUR.

Sharper! Fortify thy Spleen: Such a Jeſt! Speak when thou art ready.

SHARPER.

Now, were I ill-natur'd, would I utterly diſappoint thy Mirth: Hear thee tell thy mighty Jeſt, with as much Gravity as a Biſhop hears Venereal Cauſes in the Spiritual Court: Not ſo much as wrinkle my Face with one Smile; but let thee look ſimply, and laugh by thyſelf.

BELL-

BELLMOUR.

Pſhaw, no; I have a better Opinion of thy Wit—Gad, I defy thee.——

SHARPER.

Were it not Loſs of Time, you ſhould make the Experiment. But honeſt *Setter*, here, overheard you with *Lucy*, and has told me all.

BELLMOUR.

Nay then, I thank thee for not putting me out of Countenance. But, to tell you Something you don't know—I got an Opportunity (after I had marry'd 'em) of diſcovering the Cheat to *Sylvia*. She took it at firſt, as another Woman would the like Diſappointment; but my Promiſe to make her Amends quickly with another Huſband, ſomewhat pacify'd her.

SHARPER.

But how the Devil do you think to acquit yourſelf of your Promiſe? Will you marry her yourſelf?

BELLMOUR.

I have no ſuch Intentions at preſent—Prithee, wilt thou think a little for me? I am ſure the ingenious Mr. *Setter* will aſſiſt.

SETTER.

O Lord, Sir!

BELL-

BELLMOUR.

I'll leave him with you, and go ſhift my Habit.

SCENE VI.

SHARPER, SETTER, *Sir* JOSEPH WITTOLL, *and* BLUFFE.

SHARPER.

HEH! Sure, Fortune has ſent this Fool hither on Purpoſe. *Setter*, ſtand cloſe; ſeem not to obſerve 'em; and, hark-ye — [*Whiſpers.*

BLUFFE.

Fear him not — I am prepar'd for him now; and he ſhall find he might have ſafer rous'd a ſleeping Lion.

Sir JOSEPH.

Huſh, huſh: Don't you ſee him?

BLUFFE.

Show him to me.—Where is he?

Sir JOSEPH.

Nay, don't ſpeak ſo loud—I don't jeſt, as I did a little While ago—Look yonder —Agad, if he ſhould hear the Lion roar, he'd cudgel him into an Aſs, and his primitive Braying. Don't you remember the

the Story in *Eſop*'s *Fables*, Bully? Agad, there are good Morals to be pick'd out of *Eſop*'s *Fables*, let me tell you that; and *Reynard the Fox* too.

BLUFFE.

Damn your Morals.

Sir JOSEPH.

Prithee, don't ſpeak ſo loud.

BLUFFE.

Damn your Morals; I muſt revenge the Affront done to my Honor. [*In a low Voice.*

Sir JOSEPH.

Ay; do, do, Captain, if you think fitting—You may diſpoſe of your own Fleſh as you think fitting, d'ye ſee:——But by the Lord *Harry*, I'll leave you.

[*Stealing away upon his Tip-toes.*

BLUFFE.

Prodigious! What, will you forſake your Friend in Extremity? You can't in Honor refuſe to carry him a Challenge.

[*Almoſt whiſpering, and treading ſoftly after him.*

Sir JOSEPH.

Prithee, what do you ſee in my Face, that looks as if I would carry a Challenge? Honor is your Province, Captain; take it—All the World know me to be a Knight, and a Man of Worſhip.

SETTER.

SETTER.

I warrant you, Sir, I'm inſtructed.

SHARPER.

Impoſſible! *Araminta* take a Liking to a Fool! [*Aloud.*

SETTER.

Her Head runs on Nothing elſe, nor ſhe can talk of Nothing elſe.

SHARPER.

I know ſhe commended him all the While we were in the Park; but I thought it had been only to make *Vainlove* jealous.——

Sir JOSEPH.

How's this? Good Bully, hold your Breath, and let's hearken. Agad, this muſt be I.——

SHARPER.

Death, it can't be.—An Oaf, an Ideot, a Wittol.

Sir JOSEPH.

Ay, now it's out; 'tis I, my own individual Perſon.

SHARPER.

A Wretch, that has flown for Shelter to the loweſt Shrub of Mankind, and ſeeks Protection from a blaſted Coward.

Sir JOSEPH.

That's you, Bully Back.

[Bluffe *frowns upon Sir* Joſeph.

SHARPER.

SHARPER.

She has given *Vainlove* her Promiſe to marry him before to Morrow Morning.—Has ſhe not? [*To* Setter.

SETTER.

She has, Sir;—And I have it in Charge to attend her all this Evening, in order to conduct her to the Place appointed.

SHARPER.

Well, I'll go and inform your Maſter; and do you preſs her to make all the Haſte imaginable.

SCENE VII.

SETTER, *Sir* JOSEPH WITTOLL, BLUFFE.

SETTER.

WERE I a Rogue now, what a noble Prize could I diſpoſe of! A goodly Pinnace, richly laden, and to launch forth under my auſpicious Convoy. Twelve thouſand Pounds, and all her Rigging; beſides what lies conceal'd under Hatches. —Ha! All this committed to my Care!—Avaunt Temptation.—*Setter*, ſhow thyſelf a Perſon of Worth; be true to thy Truſt, and be reputed honeſt. Reputed honeſt! Hum:

Hum: Is that all? Ay: For to be honeſt is Nothing; the Reputation of it is all. Reputation! what have ſuch poor Rogues as I to do with Reputation? 'tis above us; and for Men of Quality, they are above it; ſo that Reputation is e'en as fooliſh a Thing as Honeſty. And for my Part, if I meet Sir *Joſeph* with a Purſe of Gold in his Hand, I'll diſpoſe of mine to the beſt Advantage.

Sir JOSEPH.

Heh! heh! heh! Here 'tis for you, i'faith, Mr. *Setter*. Nay, I'll take you at your Word. [*Chinking a Purſe.*

SETTER.

Sir *Joſeph* and the Captain too! undone, undone! I'm undone, my Maſter's undone, my Lady's undone, and all the Buſineſs is undone.

Sir JOSEPH.

No, no, never fear, Man, the Lady's Buſineſs ſhall be done. What——Come, Mr. *Setter*, I have overheard all, and to ſpeak, is but Loſs of Time; but if there be Occaſion, let theſe worthy Gentlemen intercede for me. [*Gives him Gold.*

SETTER.

O Lord, Sir, what d'ye mean? Corrupt my Honeſty!——They have indeed very perſuading Faces. But—— *Sir*

Sir JOSEPH.

'Tis too little, there's more, Man. There, take all—Now——

SETTER.

Well, Sir *Joſeph,* you have ſuch a winning Way with you——

Sir JOSEPH.

And how, and how, good *Setter,* did the little Rogue look, when ſhe talk'd of Sir *Joſeph?* Did not her Eyes twinkle, and her Mouth water? Did not ſhe pull up her little Bubbies; And — Agad, I'm ſo overjoy'd — And ſtroke down her Belly? and then ſtep aſide to tie her Garter, when ſhe was thinking of her Love? Hey, *Setter?*

SETTER.

Oh, yes, Sir.

Sir JOSEPH.

How now, Bully? What, melancholy, becauſe I'm in the Lady's Favor? — No Matter, I'll make your Peace — I know they were a little ſmart upon you—But I warrant I'll bring you into the Lady's good Graces.

BLUFFE.

Pſhaw, I have Petitions to ſhow. from other-gueſs Toys than ſhe. Look here; Theſe were ſent me this Morning—There, read, [*Shows Letters.*] That —— That's a Scrawl

Scrawl of Quality. Here, here's from a Counteſs too. Hum—No, hold—that's from a Knight's Wife, ſhe ſent it me by her Huſband—But here, both theſe are from Perſons of great Quality.

Sir JOSEPH.

They are either from Perſons of great Quality, or no Quality at all, 'tis ſuch a damn'd ugly Hand.

[*While Sir* Joſeph *reads,* Bluffe *whiſpers* Setter.

SETTER.

Captain, I would do any Thing to ſerve you; but this is ſo difficult—

BLUFFE.

Not at all. Don't I know him?

SETTER.

You'll remember the Conditions?—

BLUFFE.

I'll give't you under my Hand—In the mean Time, here's Earneſt. [*Gives him Money.*] Come, Knight,—I'm capitulating with Mr. *Setter* for you.

Sir JOSEPH.

Ah, honeſt *Setter*;—Sirrah, I'll give thee any Thing but a Night's Lodging.

SCENE VIII.

SHARPER *tugging in* HEARTWELL,

SHARPER.

NAY, prithee leave Railing, and come along with me: May be ſhe mayn't be within. 'Tis but to yond' Corner-Houſe.

HEARTWELL.

Whither? Whither? Which Corner-Houſe?

SHARPER.

Why, there: The two white Poſts.

HEARTWELL.

And who would you viſit there, ſay you? (Oons, how my Heart aches.)

SHARPER.

Pſhaw, thou'rt ſo troubleſome and inquiſitive—Why, I'll tell you; 'Tis a young Creature that *Vainlove* debauch'd, and has forſaken. Did you never hear *Bellmour* chide him about *Sylvia?*

HEARTWELL.

Death, and Hell, and Marriage! My Wife! [*Aſide.*

SHARPER.

SHARPER.

Why thou art as muſty as a new marry'd Man, that had found his Wife knowing the firſt Night.

HEARTWELL.

Hell, and the Devil! Does he know it? But, hold——If he ſhould not, I were a Fool to diſcover it——I'll diſſemble, and try him. [*Aſide.*] Ha! ha! ha! Why, *Tom,* Is that ſuch an Occaſion of Melancholy? Is it ſuch an uncommon Miſchief?

SHARPER.

No, faith; I believe not.—Few Women, but have their Year of Probation, before they are cloiſter'd in the narrow Joys of Wedlock. But, prithee come along with me, or I'll go and have the Lady to myſelf. B'w'y *George.* [*Going.*

HEARTWELL.

O Torture! How he racks and tears me!—Death! Shall I own my Shame, or wittingly let him go and whore my Wife? No, that's inſupportable—Oh, *Sharper!*

SHARPER.

How now?

HEARTWELL.

Oh, I am—marry'd.

SHARPER.

(Now hold, Spleen.) Marry'd!

HEARTWELL.

Certainly, irrecoverably marry'd.

SHARPER.

Heav'n forbid, Man! How long?

HEARTWELL.

Oh, an Age, an Age! I have been marry'd theſe two Hours.

SHARPER.

My old Batchelor marry'd! That were a Jeſt. Ha! ha! ha!

HEARTWELL.

Death! D'ye mock me? Hark ye, if either you eſteem my Friendſhip, or your own Safety — Come not near that Houſe —that Corner-Houſe — that hot Brothel. Aſk no Queſtions.

SHARPER.

Mad, by this Light.
Thus Grief ſtill treads upon the Heels of Pleaſure:
Marry'd in Haſte, we may repent at Leiſure.

SCENE IX.

SHARPER, SETTER.

SETTER.

SOME by Experience find thoſe Words miſplac'd:
At Leiſure marry'd, they repent in Haſte.

As

As I ſuppoſe my Maſter *Heartwell.*

SHARPER.

Here again, my *Mercury!*

SETTER.

Sublimate, if you pleaſe, Sir: I think my Achievements do deſerve the Epithet —*Mercury* was a Pimp too; but, though I bluſh to own it, at this Time, I muſt confeſs I am ſomewhat fall'n from the Dignity of my Function, and do condeſcend to be ſcandalouſly employ'd in the Promotion of vulgar Matrimony.

SHARPER.

As how, dear dexterous Pimp?

SETTER.

Why, to be brief, for I have weighty Affairs depending — Our Stratagem ſucceeded as you intended — *Bluffe* turns arrant Traitor; bribes me, to make a private Conveyance of the Lady to him, and put a ſham Settlement upon Sir *Joſeph.*

SHARPER.

O Rogue! Well, but I hope—

SETTER.

No, no; never fear me, Sir—I privately inform'd the Knight of the Treachery; who has agreed, ſeemingly to be cheated, that the Captain may be ſo in Reality.

SHARPER.

Where's the Bride?

SETTER.

Shifting Clothes for the Purpoſe, at a Friend's Houſe of mine. Here's Company coming; if you'll walk this Way, Sir, I'll tell you.

SCENE X.

BELLMOUR, BELINDA, ARAMINTA, *and* VAINLOVE.

VAINLOVE.

OH, 'twas Phrenſy all: Cannot you forgive it?—Men in Madneſs have a Title to your Pity—— [*To* Araminta.

ARAMINTA.

——Which they forfeit, when they are reſtor'd to their Senſes.

VAINLOVE.

I am not preſuming beyond a Pardon.

ARAMINTA.

You who cou'd reproach me with one counterfeit, how inſolent would a real Pardon make you! But there's no Need to forgive what is not worth my Anger.

BELINDA.

BELINDA.

O'my Conſcience, I cou'd find in my Heart to marry thee, purely to be rid of thee—At leaſt, thou art ſo troubleſome a Lover, there's Hopes thou'lt make a more than ordinary quiet Huſband.

[*To* Bellmour.

BELLMOUR.

Say you ſo?—Is that a Maxim among ye?

BELINDA.

Yes: You fluttering Men of the Mode have made Marriage a mere *French* Diſh.

BELLMOUR.

I hope there's no *French* Sauce. [*Aſide.*

BELINDA.

You are ſo curious in the Preparation, that is, your Courtſhip, one wou'd think you meant a noble Entertainment — But when we come to feed, 'tis all Froth, and poor, but in Show. Nay, often, only Remains, which have been, I know not how many Times, warm'd for other Company, and at laſt ſerv'd up cold to the Wife.

BELLMOUR.

That were a miſerable Wretch indeed, who could not afford one warm Diſh for the Wife of his Boſom——But you timorous Virgins form a dreadful Chimæra of

a Huſband, as of a Creature contrary to that ſoft, humble, pliant, eaſy Thing, a Lover; ſo gueſs at Plagues in Matrimony, in Oppoſition to the Pleaſures of Courtſhip. Alas! Courtſhip to Marriage, is but as the Muſic in the Playhouſe, 'till the Curtain's drawn; but that once up, then opens the Scene of Pleaſure.

BELINDA.

Oh, foh —— no: Rather, Courtſhip to Marriage, is as a very witty Prologue to a very dull Play.

SCENE XI.

[*To them*] SHARPER.

SHARPER.

HIST,—*Bellmour:* If you'll bring the Ladies, make Haſte to *Sylvia*'s Lodgings, before *Heartwell* has fretted himſelf out of Breath. —

BELLMOUR.

You have an Opportunity now, Madam, to revenge yourſelf upon *Heartwell,* for affronting your Squirrel. [*To* Belinda.

BELINDA.

O the filthy rude Beaſt!

ARAMINTA.

ARAMINTA.

'Tis a laſting Quarrel: I think he has never been at our Houſe ſince.

BELLMOUR.

But give yourſelves the Trouble to walk to that Corner-Houſe, and I'll tell you by the Way what may divert and ſurpriſe you.

SCENE XII.

SCENE, SYLVIA's *Lodgings.*

HEARTWELL *and* BOY.

HEARTWELL.

GONE forth, ſay you, with her Maid?

BOY.

There was a Man too that fetch'd 'em out—*Setter,* I think they call'd him.

HEARTWELL.

So—h—— That precious Pimp too — Damn'd, damn'd Strumpet? Cou'd ſhe not contain herſelf on her Wedding Day! Not hold out 'till Night! O curſed State! How wide we err, when, apprehenſive of the Load of Life,

——— *We*

——— *We hope to find*
That Help which Nature meant in Womankind,
To Man that Supplemental Self deſign'd;
But proves a burning Cauſtic when apply'd:
And Adam, *ſure, cou'd with more Eaſe abide*
The Bone when broken, than when made a Bride.

SCENE XIII.

[*To him*] BELLMOUR, BELINDA, VAINLOVE, ARAMINTA.

BELLMOUR.

NOW *George*, what, Rhyming! I thought the Chimes of Verſe were paſt, when once the doleful Marriage Knell was rung.

HEARTWELL.

Shame and Confuſion! I am expoſed.

[Vainlove *and* Araminta *talk apart.*

BELINDA.

Joy, Joy, Mr. *Bridegroom;* I give you Joy, Sir.

HEARTWELL.

'Tis not in thy Nature to give me Joy—A Woman can as ſoon give Immortality.

BELINDA.

Ha! ha! ha! O Gad, Men grow ſuch Clowns when they are married——

BELL-

BELLMOUR.

That they are fit for no Company but their Wives.

BELINDA.

Nor for them neither, in a little Time—I ſwear, at the Month's End, you ſhall hardly find a married Man, that will do a civil Thing to his Wife, or ſay a civil Thing to any Body elſe. How he looks already. Ha! ha! ha.

BELLMOUR.

Ha! ha! ha!

HEARTWELL.

Death! Am I made your Laughing-Stock? For you, Sir, I ſhall find a Time; but take off your Waſp here, or the Clown may grow boiſterous. I have a Fly-Flap.

BELINDA.

You have Occaſion for't, your Wife has been blown upon.

BELLMOUR.

That's home.

HEARTWELL.

Not Fiends or Furies could have added to my Vexation, or any Thing, but another Woman—You've rack'd my Patience; be gone, or by ——

BELL-

BELLMOUR.

Hold, hold. What the Devil, thou wilt not draw upon a Woman?

VAINLOVE.

What's the Matter?

ARAMINTA.

Bleſs me! What have you done to him?

BELINDA.

Only touch'd a gall'd Beaſt 'till he winch'd.

VAINLOVE.

Bellmour, give it over; you vex him too much? 'Tis all ſerious to him.

BELINDA.

Nay, I ſwear, I begin to pity him, myſelf.

HEARTWELL.

Damn your Pity — But let me be calm a little—How have I deſerv'd this of you? Any of ye? Sir, have I impair'd the Honor of your Houſe, promis'd your Siſter Marriage, and whor'd her? Wherein have I injur'd you? Did I bring a Phyſician to your Father when he lay expiring, and endeavour to prolong his Life, and you one and twenty? Madam, have I had an Opportunity with you and balk'd it? Did you ever offer me the Favor that I refus'd it? Or ——

BELINDA.

BELINDA.

Oh foh! What does the filthy Fellow mean? Lard, let me be gone.

ARAMINTA.

Hang me, if I pity you; you are right enough ſerv'd.

BELLMOUR.

This is a little ſcurrilous tho'.

VAINLOVE.

Nay, 'tis a Sore of your own ſcratching—Well, *George*, ——

HEARTWELL.

You are the principal Cauſe of all my preſent Ills. If *Sylvia* had not been your Miſtreſs, my Wife might have been honeſt.

VAINLOVE.

And if *Sylvia* had not been your Wife, my Miſtreſs might have been juſt—There, we are even — But have a good Heart, I heard of your Misfortune, and come to your Relief.

HEARTWELL.

When Execution's over, you offer a Reprieve.

VAINLOVE.

What would you give?

HEARTWELL.

Oh! Any Thing, every Thing, a Leg or two, or an Arm; nay, I would be divorced

vorced from my Virility, to be divorced from my Wife.

SCENE XIV.

[*To them*] SHARPER.

VAINLOVE.

FAITH, that's a ſure Way—But here's one can ſell you Freedom better cheap.

SHARPER.

Vainlove, I have been a kind of a God-father to you, yonder. I have promiſed and vow'd ſome Things in your Name, which I think you are bound to perform.

VAINLOVE.

No ſigning to a Blank, Friend.

SHARPER.

No, I'll deal fairly with you — 'Tis a full and free Diſcharge to Sir *Joſeph Wittoll* and Captain *Bluffe;* for all Injuries whatſoever, done unto you by them, until the preſent Date hereof — How ſay you?

VAINLOVE.

Agreed.

SHARPER.

Then, let me beg theſe Ladies to wear their

their Maſks a Moment. Come in, Gentlemen and Ladies.

HEARTWELL.

What the Devil's all this to me?

VAINLOVE.

Patience.

SCENE *The Laſt.*

[*To them*] *Sir* JOSEPH WITTOLL, BLUFFE, SYLVIA, LUCY, SETTER.

BLUFFE.

ALL Injuries whatſoever, Mr. *Sharper*.

Sir JOSEPH.

Ay, ay, whatſoever, Captain, ſtick to that; whatſoever.

SHARPER.

'Tis done, theſe Gentlemen are Witneſſes to the general Releaſe.

VAINLOVE.

Ay, ay, to this inſtant Moment—I have paſs'd an Act of Oblivion.

BLUFFE.

'Tis very generous, Sir, ſince I needs muſt own ——

Sir JOSEPH.

No, no, Captain, you need not own, heh!

heh! heh! heh! 'Tis I muſt own ——

BLUFFE.

——That you are over-reach'd too, ha! ha! ha! only a little Art-military uſed — only undermined, or ſo, as ſhall appear by the fair *Araminta*, my Wife's Permiſſion. Oh, the Devil! cheated at laſt! [Lucy *unmaſks.*

Sir JOSEPH.

Only a little Art-military Trick, Captain, only countermin'd, or ſo—Mr. *Vainlove*, I ſuppoſe you know whom I have got now,—but all's forgiven.

VAINLOVE.

I know whom you have not got; pray Ladies convince him.

[Araminta *and* Belinda *unmaſk.*

Sir JOSEPH.

Ah! O Lord, my Heart aches——Ah! *Setter*, a Rogue of all Sides.

SHARPER.

Sir *Joſeph*, you had better have pre-engag'd this Gentleman's Pardon: For though *Vainlove* be ſo generous to forgive the Loſs of his Miſtreſs—I know not how *Heartwell* may take the Loſs of his Wife.

[Sylvia *unmaſks.*

HEARTWELL.

My Wife! By this Light 'tis ſhe, the very Cockatrice——Oh *Sharper!* Let me embrace

embrace thee — But art thou ſure ſhe is really married to him?

SETTER.

Really and lawfully married, I am Witneſs.

SHARPER.

Bellmour will unriddle to you.

[Heartwell *goes to* Bellmour.

Sir JOSEPH.

Pray, Madam, who are you? For I find you and I are like to be better acquainted.

SYLVIA.

The worſt of me, is, that I am your Wife ——

SHARPER.

Come, Sir *Joſeph*, your Fortune is not ſo bad as you fear — A fine Lady, and a Lady of very good Quality.

Sir JOSEPH.

Thanks to my Knighthood, ſhe's a Lady ——

VAINLOVE.

That deſerves a Fool with a better Title—Pray uſe her as my Relation, or you ſhall hear on't.

BLUFFE.

What, are you a Woman of Quality too, Spouſe?

SETTER.

And my Relation; pray let her be reſpected accordingly — Well, honeſt *Lucy*, fare thee well — I think, you and I have been Play-fellows off and on, any Time this ſeven Years.

LUCY.

Hold your prating—I'm thinking what Vocation I ſhall follow while my Spouſe is planting Laurels in the Wars.

BLUFFE.

No more Wars, Spouſe, no more Wars— While I plant Laurels for my Head abroad, I may find the Branches ſprout at home.

HEARTWELL.

Bellmour, I approve thy Mirth, and thank thee—And I cannot in Gratitude (for I ſee which Way thou art going) ſee thee fall into the ſame Snare, out of which thou haſt deliver'd me.

BELLMOUR.

I thank thee, *George*, for thy good Intention — But there is a Fatality in Marriage—For I find I'm reſolute.

HEARTWELL.

Then good Counſel will be thrown away upon you—For my Part, I have once eſcap'd—And when I wed again, may ſhe be — Ugly, as an old Bawd ——

VAIN-

VAINLOVE.

Ill-natur'd as an old Maid ——

BELLMOUR.

Wanton as a young Widow ——

SHARPER.

And jealous as a barren Wife.

HEARTWELL.

Agreed.

BELLMOUR.

Well; 'midſt of theſe dreadful Denunciations, and notwithſtanding the Warning and Example before me, I commit myſelf to laſting Durance.

BELINDA.

Priſoner, make much of your Fetters.

[*Giving her Hand.*

BELLMOUR.

Frank, will you keep us in Countenance?

VAINLOVE.

May I preſume to hope ſo great a Bleſſing?

ARAMINTA.

We had better take the Advantage of a little of our Friends Experience firſt.

BELLMOUR.

O'my Conſcience, ſhe dares not conſent, for fear he ſhould recant. [*Aſide.*] Well, we ſhall have your Company to Church in the Morning — May be it may get you

an Appetite to ſee us all fall to before ye. *Setter,* did not you tell me? ——

SETTER.

They're at the Door: I'll call 'em in.

A DANCE.

BELLMOUR.

Now ſet we forward on a Journey for Life—Come, take your Fellow-Travellers. Old *Georgé,* I'm ſorry to ſee thee ſtill plod on alone.

HEARTWELL.

With gaudy Plumes and gingling Bells made proud,
The youthful Beaſt ſets forth, and neighs aloud.
A Morning Sun his tinſell'd Harneſs gilds,
And the firſt Stage a down-hill Green-ſward yields.
But, Oh ——
What rugged Ways attend the Noon of Life!
(Our Sun declines) and with what anxious Strife,
What Pain, we tug that galling Load, a Wife.
All Courſers the firſt Heat with Vigor run;
But 'tis with Whip and Spur the Race is won. [*Exeunt Omnes.*

EPI-

EPILOGUE.

Spoken by Mrs. BARRY.

AS a raſh Girl, who will all Hazards run,
And be enjoy'd, tho' ſure to be undone;
Soon as her Curioſity is over,
Would give the World ſhe could her Toy recover:
So fares it with our Poet; and I'm ſent
To tell you, he already does repent:
Would you were all as forward, to keep Lent.
Now the Deed's done, the giddy Thing has Leiſure
To think o'th' Sting, that's in the Tail of Pleaſure.
Methinks I hear him in Conſideration!
What will the World ſay? Where's my Reputation?
Now that's at Stake—No, Fool, 'tis out o' Faſhion.
If Loſs of that ſhould follow Want of Wit,
How many Undone Men were in the Pit!
Why that's ſome Comfort to an Author's Fears,
If he's an Aſs, he will be try'd by's Peers.

EPILOGUE.

But hold—I am exceeding my Commiſſion;
My Buſineſs here, was humbly to Petition:
But we're ſo us'd to rail on theſe Occaſions,
I could not help one Trial of your Patience:
For 'tis our Way (you know) for fear o'th' worſt,
To be beforehand ſtill, and cry Fool firſt.
How ſay you, Sparks? How do you ſtand affected?
I ſwear, young Bays *within, is ſo dejected,*
'Twou'd grieve your Hearts to ſee him; ſhall I call him?
But then you cruel Critics would ſo maul him!
Yet, may be, you'll encourage a Beginner;
But how?—Juſt as the Devil does a Sinner.
Women and Wits are us'd e'en much at one,
You gain your End, and damn 'em when you've done.

THE

F. Hayman inv. et del. C. Grignion sculp.

The Double Dealer.

THE

DOUBLE DEALER.

A

COMEDY.

Interdum tamen, et vocem Comœdia tollit.

Hor. Ars Poet.

Huic equidem Consilio palmam do: hic me magnificè effero, qui vim tantam in me et potestatem habeam tantæ astutiæ, vera dicendo ut eos ambos fallam.

Syr. in Terent. Heaut.

Printed in the YEAR MDCCLXI.

To the Right Honorable

CHARLES MONTAGUE,

ONE OF THE

Lords of the Treaſury.

SIR,

I Heartily wiſh this Play were as perfect as I intended it, that it might be more worthy your Acceptance; and that my Dedication of it to you, might be more becoming that Honor and Eſteem which I, with every Body, who is ſo fortunate as to know you, have for you. It had your Countenance when yet unknown; and now

now it is made public, it wants your Protection.

I would not have any Body imagine, that I think this Play without its Faults, for I am conſcious of ſeveral. I confeſs I deſign'd (whatever Vanity or Ambition occaſion'd that Deſign) to have written a true and regular Comedy: But I found it an Undertaking which put me in mind of——*Sudet multum, fruſtraque laboret auſus idem.* And now to make Amends for the Vanity of ſuch a Deſign, I do confeſs both the Attempt, and the imperfect Performance. Yet I muſt take the Boldneſs to ſay, I have not miſcarried in the Whole; for the Mechanical Part of it is regular. That I may ſay with as little Vanity, as a Builder may ſay he has built a Houſe according to the Model laid down before him; or a Gardener that he has ſet his Flowers in a Knot of ſuch or ſuch a Figure. I deſign'd the Moral firſt, and to that Moral I invented the Fable, and do not know that I have borrow'd one Hint

of

of it any where. I made the Plot as ſtrong as I could, becauſe it was ſingle, and I made it ſingle, becauſe I would avoid Confuſion, and was reſolved to preſerve the three Unities of the Drama. Sir, this Diſcourſe is very impertinent to you, whoſe Judgment much better can diſcern the Faults, than I can excuſe them; and whoſe Good-nature, like that of a Lover, will find out thoſe hidden Beauties (if there are any ſuch) which it would be great Immodeſty for me to diſcover. I think I don't ſpeak improperly when I call you a *Lover* of Poetry; for it is very well known ſhe has been a very kind Miſtreſs to you; ſhe has not denied you the laſt Favor; and ſhe has been fruitful to you in a moſt beautiful Iſſue — If I break off abruptly here, I hope every Body will underſtand that it is to avoid a Commendation, which, as it is your Due, would be moſt eaſy for me to pay, and too troubleſome for you to receive.

I have, ſince the acting of this Play, hearken'd after the Objections which have been made to it; for I was conſcious where a true Critic might have put me upon my Defence. I was prepared for the Attack; and am pretty confident I could have vindicated ſome Parts, and excuſed others; and where there were any plain Miſcarriages, I would moſt ingenuouſly have confeſs'd 'em. But I have not heard any Thing ſaid ſufficient to provoke an Anſwer. That which looks moſt like an Objection, does not relate in particular to this Play, but to all or moſt that ever have been written; and that is Soliloquy. Therefore I will anſwer it, not only for my own Sake, but to ſave others the Trouble, to whom it may hereafter be objected.

I grant, that for a Man to talk to himſelf, appears abſurd and unnatural; and indeed it is ſo in moſt Caſes; but the Circumſtances which may attend the Occaſion, make great Alteration. It oftentimes happens

happens to a Man, to have Deſigns which require him to himſelf, and in their Nature cannot admit of a Confident. Such, for certain, is all Villainy; and other leſs miſchievous Intentions may be very improper to be communicated to a ſecond Perſon. In ſuch a Caſe therefore the Audience muſt obſerve, whether the Perſon upon the Stage takes any Notice of them at all, or no. For if he ſuppoſes any one to be by, when he talks to himſelf, it is monſtrous and ridiculous to the laſt Degree. Nay; not only in this Caſe, but in any Part of a Play, if there is expreſſed any Knowledge of an Audience, it is inſufferable. But otherwiſe, when a Man in Soliloquy reaſons with himſelf, and *Pro's* and *Cons*, and weighs all his Deſigns: We ought not to imagine that this Man either talks to us, or to himſelf; he is only thinking, and thinking ſuch Matter as were inexcuſable Folly in him to ſpeak. But becauſe we are conceal'd Spectators of the Plot in Agitation, and the

Poet

Poet finds it neceſſary to let us know the whole Myſtery of his Contrivance, he is willing to inform us of this Perſon's Thoughts; and to that End is forced to make Uſe of the Expedient of Speech, no other better Way being yet invented for the Communication of Thought.

Another very wrong Objection has been made by ſome who have not taken Leiſure to diſtinguiſh the Characters. The Hero of the Play, as they are pleas'd to call him, (meaning *Mellefont)* is a Gull, and made a Fool, and cheated. Is every Man a Gull and a Fool that is deceiv'd? At that Rate I'm afraid the two Claſſes of Men will be reduced to one, and the Knaves themſelves be at a Loſs to juſtify their Title: But if an open-hearted honeſt Man, who has an entire Confidence in one whom he takes to be his Friend, and whom he has oblig'd to be ſo; and who (to confirm him in his Opinion) in all Appearance, and upon ſeveral Trials has been ſo: If this Man be deceiv'd by the

Treachery

Treachery of the other; muſt he of Neceſſity commence Fool immediately, only becauſe the other has prov'd a Villain? Ay, but there was Caution given to *Mellefont* in the firſt Act by his Friend *Careleſs*. Of what Nature was that Caution? Only to give the Audience ſome Light into the Character of *Maſkwell*, before his Appearance; and not to convince *Mellefont* of his Treachery; for that was more than *Careleſs* was then able to do: He never knew *Maſkwell* guilty of any Villainy; he was only a Sort of Man which he did not like. As for his ſuſpecting his Familiarity with my Lady *Touchwood*: Let 'em examine the Anſwer that *Mellefont* makes him, and compare it with the Conduct of *Maſkwell*'s Character through the Play.

I would beg 'em again to look into the Character of *Maſkwell*, before they accuſe *Mellefont* of Weakneſs for being deceiv'd by him. For upon ſumming up the Enquiry into this Objection, it may be found they

they have miſtaken Cunning in one Character, for Folly in another.

But there is one Thing, at which I am more concerned than all the falſe Criticiſms that are made upon me; and that is, ſome of the Ladies are offended. I am heartily ſorry for it, for I declare I would rather diſoblige all the Critics in the World, than one of the Fair Sex. They are concerned that I have repreſented ſome Women vicious and affected: How can I help it? It is the Buſineſs of a Comic Poet to paint the Vices and Follies of Humankind; and there are but two Sexes, Male, and Female, *Men,* and *Women,* which have a Title to Humanity: And if I leave one Half of them out, the Work will be imperfect. I ſhould be very glad of an Opportunity to make my Compliment to thoſe Ladies who are offended: But they can no more expect it in a Comedy, than to be tickled by a Surgeon, when he's letting 'em Blood. They who are virtuous or diſcreet, ſhould not be offended; for

ſuch

ſuch Characters as theſe diſtinguiſh *them,* and make their Beauties more ſhining and obſerv'd: And they who are of the other Kind may nevertheleſs paſs for ſuch, by ſeeming not to be diſpleas'd, or touch'd with the Satire of this *Comedy.* Thus have they alſo wrongfully accus'd me of doing them a Prejudice, when I have in Reality done them a Service.

You will pardon me, Sir, for the Freedom I take of making Anſwers to other People, in an Epiſtle which ought wholly to be ſacred to you: But ſince I intend the Play to be ſo too, I hope I may take the more Liberty of juſtifying it, where it is in the Right.

I muſt now, Sir, declare to the World, how kind you have been to my Endeavours; for in Regard of what was well meant, you have excus'd what was ill perform'd. I beg you would continue the ſame Method in your Acceptance of this Dedication. I know no other Way of making a Return to that Humanity you

ſhow'd, in protecting an Infant, but by enrolling it in your Service, now that it is of Age and come into the World. Therefore be pleas'd to accept of this as an Acknowledgment of the Favor you have ſhown me, and an Earneſt of the real Service and Gratitude of,

S I R,

Your Moſt Obliged,

Humble Servant,

WILLIAM CONGREVE.

To my Dear Friend

Mr. *CONGREVE*,

On his COMEDY, call'd,

The Double Dealer.

WELL *then; the promis'd Hour is come at laſt;*
The preſent Age of Wit obſcures the paſt:
Strong were our Sires; and as they Fought they Writ,
Conqu'ring with Force of Arms, and Dint of Wit:
Theirs was the Giant Race, before the Flood;
And thus, when Charles *return'd, our Empire ſtood.*
Like Janus *he the ſtubborn Soil manur'd,*
With Rules of Huſbandry the Rankneſs cur'd:
Tam'd us to Manners, when the Stage was rude;
And boiſt'rous Engliſh *Wit, with Art endu'd.*

To Mr. CONGREVE.

Our Age was cultivated thus at length;
But what we gain'd in Skill, we loſt in Strength.
Our Builders were, with Want of Genius, curſt;
The Second Temple was not like the Firſt:
'Till You, the beſt Vitruvius, *come at length;*
Our Beauties equal; but excel our Strength.
Firm Doric *Pillars found your ſolid Baſe:*
The fair Corinthian *crowns the higher Space;*
Thus all below is Strength, and all above is Grace.
In eaſy Dialogue is Fletcher's *Praiſe:*
He mov'd the Mind, but had not Pow'r to raiſe.
Great Johnſon *did by Strength of Judgment pleaſe:*
Yet doubling Fletcher's *Force, he wants his Eaſe.*
In diff'ring Talents both adorn'd their Age;
One for the Study, t'other for the Stage.
But both to Congreve *juſtly ſhall ſubmit,*
One match'd in Judgment, both o'ermatch'd in Wit.
In him all Beauties of this Age we ſee;
Etherege *his Courtſhip,* Southern's *Purity;*
The Satire, Wit, and Strength of manly Wicherly.

All

To Mr. CONGREVE.

All this in blooming Youth you have achiev'd;
Nor are your foil'd Contemporaries griev'd;
So much the Sweetneſs of your Manners move,
We cannot envy you, becauſe we love.
Fabius *might joy in* Scipio, *when he ſaw*
A beardleſs Conſul made againſt the Law,
And join his Suffrage to the Votes of Rome;
Though he with Hannibal *was overcome.*
Thus old Romano *bow'd to* Raphael's *Fame;*
And Scholar to the Youth he taught, became.
Oh that your Brows my Laurel had ſuſtain'd,
Well had I been depos'd if you had reign'd!
The Father had deſcended for the Son;
For only You are lineal to the Throne.
Thus when the State one Edward *did depoſe;*
A greater Edward *in his Room aroſe.*
But now, not I, but Poetry is curs'd;
For Tom *the Second reigns like* Tom *the Firſt.*
But let 'em not miſtake my Patron's Part;
Nor call his Charity their own Deſert.
Yet this I propheſy; Thou ſhalt be ſeen,
(Tho' with ſome ſhort Parentheſis between:)
High on the Throne of Wit; and ſeated there,
Not mine (that's little) but thy Laurel wear.

To Mr. CONGREVE.

Thy firſt Attempt an early Promiſe made;
That early Promiſe this has more than paid.
So bold, yet ſo judiciouſly you dare,
That your leaſt Praiſe, is to be regular.
Time, Place, and Action, may with Pains be wrought,
But Genius muſt be born; and never can be taught.
This is Your Portion; this Your Native Store;
Heav'n, that but once was Prodigal before,
To Shakeſpear *gave as much; ſhe cou'd not give him more.*
Maintain your Poſt: That's all the Fame you need;
For 'tis impoſſible you ſhou'd proceed.
Already I am worn with Cares and Age;
And juſt abandoning th' ungrateful Stage:
Unprofitably kept at Heav'n's Expence,
I live a Rent-charge on his Providence:
But You, whom ev'ry Muſe and Grace adorn,
Whom I foreſee to better Fortune born,
Be kind to my Remains; and oh defend,
Againſt your Judgment, your departed Friend!

Let

To Mr. CONGREVE.

Let not th' insulting Foe my Fame pursue;
But shade those Laurels which descend to You:
And take for Tribute what these Lines express:
You merit more; nor cou'd my Love do less.

JOHN DRYDEN.

PROLOGUE.

Spoken by Mrs. BRACEGIRDLE.

MOORS have this Way (as Story tells) to know
Whether their Brats are truly got, or no;
Into the Sea the New-born Babe is thrown,
There, as Inſtinct directs, to ſwim, or drown.
A barbarous Device, to try if Spouſe
Has kept religiouſly her Nuptial Vows.

Such are the Trials, Poets make of Plays:
Only they truſt to more inconſtant Seas;
So does our Author, this his Child commit
To the tempeſtuous Mercy of the Pit,
To know if it be truly born of Wit.
Critics avaunt; for you are Fiſh of Prey,
And feed, like Sharks, upon an Infant Play.
Be ev'ry Monſter of the Deep away;
Let's a fair Trial have and a clear Sea.

Let

PROLOGUE.

Let Nature work, and do not Damn too ſoon,
For Life will ſtruggle long, ere it ſink down:
And will at leaſt riſe thrice, before it drown.
Let us conſider, had it been our Fate,
Thus hardly to be prov'd Legitimate!
I will not ſay, we'd all in Danger been,
Were each to ſuffer for his Mother's Sin:
But by my Troth I cannot avoid thinking,
How nearly ſome good Men might have 'ſcap'd ſinking.
But, Heav'n be prais'd, this Cuſtom is confin'd
Alone to th' Offspring of the Muſes Kind:
Our Chriſtian Cuckolds are more bent to Pity;
I know not one Moor *Huſband in the City.*
I'th' good Man's Arms the chopping Baſtard thrives,
For he thinks all his own, that is his Wife's.

Whatever Fate is for this Play deſign'd,
The Poet's ſure he ſhall ſome Comfort find:
For if his Muſe has play'd him falſe, the worſt
That can befal him, is, to be divorc'd;
You Huſbands Judge, if that be to be curs'd.

Dramatis

Dramatis Perſonæ.

M E N.

Maſkwell, a Villain; pretended Friend to *Mellefont*, Gallant to Lady *Touchwood*, and in Love with *Cynthia*.	Mr. *Betterton.*
Lord *Touchwood*, Uncle to *Mellefont.*	Mr. *Kynaſton.*
Mellefont, promiſed to, and in Love with *Cynthia.*	Mr. *Williams.*
Careleſs, his Friend.	Mr. *Verbruggen.*
Lord *Froth*, a ſolemn Coxcomb.	Mr. *Bowman.*
Briſk, a pert Coxcomb.	Mr. *Powell.*
Sir *Paul Plyant*, an uxorious, fooliſh old Knight; Brother to Lady *Touchwood*, and Father to *Cynthia.*	Mr. *Dogget.*

W O M E N.

Lady *Touchwood*, in Love with *Mellefont.*	Mrs. *Barry.*
Cynthia, Daughter to Sir *Paul* by a former Wife, promiſed to *Mellefont.*	Mrs. *Bracegirdle.*
Lady *Froth*, a great Coquet; Pretender to Poetry, Wit, and Learning.	Mrs. *Mountfort.*
Lady *Plyant*, inſolent to her Huſband, and eaſy to any Pretender.	Mrs. *Leigh.*

Chaplain, Boy, Footmen, and Attendants.

The S C E N E, A Gallery in the Lord *Touchwood*'s Houſe, with Chambers adjoining.

THE

THE DOUBLE DEALER.

ACT I. SCENE I.

A Gallery in the Lord TOUCHWOOD's *Houſe, with Chambers adjoining.*

Enter CARELESS, *croſſing the Stage, with his Hat, Gloves, and Sword in his Hands; as juſt riſen from Table:* MELLEFONT *following him.*

MELLEFONT.

NED, Ned, whither ſo faſt? What, turn'd Flincher! Why, you wo'not leave us?

CARELESS.

Where are the Women? I'm weary of guzzling, and begin to think them the better Company.

MEL-

MELLEFONT.

Then thy Reaſon ſtaggers and thou'rt almoſt drunk.

CARELESS.

No, Faith, but your Fools grow noiſy—and if a Man muſt endure the Noiſe of Words without Senſe, I think the Women have more muſical Voices, and become Nonſenſe better.

MELLEFONT.

Why, they are at the End of the Gallery; retir'd to their Tea, and Scandal; according to their ancient Cuſtom, after Dinner.—But I made a Pretence to follow you, becauſe I had Something to ſay to you in private, and I am not like to have many Opportunities this Evening.

CARELESS.

And here's this Coxcomb moſt critically come to interrupt you.

SCENE II.

[*To them*] BRISK.

BRISK.

BOYS, Boys, Lads, where are you? What, do you give Ground? Mort-

gage

gage for a Bottle, ha? *Careleſs,* this is your Trick; you're always ſpoiling Company by leaving it.

CARELESS.

And thou art always ſpoiling Company by coming into it.

BRISK.

Pooh! ha! ha! ha! I know you envy me. Spite, proud Spite, by the Gods! and burning Envy — I'll be judg'd by *Mellefont* here, who gives and takes Rallery better, you or I. Pſhaw, Man, when I ſay you ſpoil Company by leaving it, I mean you leave Nobody for the Company to laugh at. I think there I was with you; ha, *Mellefont?*

MELLEFONT.

O' my Word, *Briſk,* that was a home Thruſt; you have ſilenc'd him.

BRISK.

Oh, my dear *Mellefont,* let me periſh, if thou art not the Soul of Converſation, the very Eſſence of Wit, and Spirit of Wine.— The Deuce take me if there were three good Things ſaid, or one underſtood, ſince thy Amputation from the Body of our Society.—Heh! I think that's pretty and metaphorical enough: I'Gad I could not have ſaid it out of thy Company— *Careleſs,* ha?

CARE-

CARELESS.

Hum, ay, what is't?

BRISK.

O, *Mon Cœur!* What is't! Nay Gad I'll puniſh you for Want of Apprehenſion: The Deuce take me if I tell you.

MELLEFONT.

No, no, hang him, he has no Taſte, — But, dear *Briſk,* excuſe me, I have a little Buſineſs.

CARELESS.

Prithee get thee gone; thou ſeeſt we are ſerious.

MELLEFONT.

We'll come immediately, if you'll but go in, and keep up good Humor and Senſe in the Company: Prithee do, they'll fall aſleep elſe.

BRISK.

I'Gad ſo they will—Well I will, I will; Gad, you ſhall command me from the *Zenith* to the *Nadir.*—But the Deuce take me if I ſay a good Thing 'till you come. —— But prithee dear Rogue, make Haſte, prithee make Haſte, I ſhall burſt elſe.—And yonder's your Uncle, my Lord *Touchwood,* ſwears he'll diſinherit you, and Sir *Paul Plyant* threatens to diſclaim you for a Son in Law, and my Lord *Froth* won't dance at your Wedding

Wedding to Morrow; nor, the Deuce take me, I won't write your Epithalamium — and ſee what a Condition you're like to be brought to.

MELLEFONT.

Well, I'll ſpeak but three Words, and follow you.

BRISK.

Enough, enough; *Careleſs,* bring your Apprehenſion along with you.

SCENE III.

MELLEFONT, CARELESS.

CARELESS.

PERT Coxcomb!

MELLEFONT.

Faith 'tis a good-natur'd Coxcomb, and has very entertaining Follies — You muſt be more humane to him; at this Juncture, it will do me Service. —— I'll tell you, I would have Mirth continued this Day at any Rate; tho' Patience purchaſe Folly, and Attention be paid with Noiſe: There are Times when Senſe may be unſeaſonable, as well as Truth. Prithee do thou wear none to Day; but allow *Briſk* to have Wit, that thou may'ſt ſeem a Fool.

CARE-

CARELESS.

Why, how now, why this extravagant Propoſition?

MELLEFONT.

O, I would have no Room for ſerious Deſign; for I am jealous of a Plot. I would have Noiſe and Impertinence keep my Lady *Touchwood*'s Head from working: For Hell is not more buſy than her Brain, nor contains more Devils, than that Imaginations.

CARELESS.

I thought your Fear of her had been over——Is not to Morrow appointed for your Marriage with *Cynthia,* and her Father, Sir *Paul Plyant,* come to ſettle the Writings this Day, on Purpoſe?

MELLEFONT.

True; but you ſhall judge whether I have not Reaſon to be alarm'd. None beſides you, and *Maſkwell,* are acquainted with the Secret of my Aunt *Touchwood*'s violent Paſſion for me. Since my firſt Refuſal of her Addreſſes, ſhe has endeavour'd to do me all ill Offices with my Uncle; yet has managed 'em with that Subtilty, that to him they have born the Face of Kindneſs; while her Malice, like a dark Lantern, only ſhone upon me, where

where it was directed. Still it gave me leſs Perplexity to prevent the Succeſs of her Diſpleaſure, than to avoid the Importunities of her Love; and of two Evils, I thought myſelf favored in her Averſion: But whether urg'd by her Deſpair, and the ſhort Proſpect of the Time ſhe ſaw, to accompliſh her Deſigns; whether the Hopes of Revenge, or of her Love, terminated in the View of this my Marriage with *Cynthia*, I know not; but this Morning ſhe ſurpris'd me in my Bed. ——

CARELESS.

Was there ever ſuch a Fury! 'tis well Nature has not put it into her Sex's Power to raviſh.—Well, bleſs us! proceed. What follow'd?

MELLEFONT.

What at firſt amaz'd me; for I look'd to have ſeen her in all the Tranſports of a ſlighted and revengeful Woman: But, when I expected Thunder from her Voice, and Lightning in her Eyes; I ſaw her melted into Tears, and huſh'd into a Sigh. It was long before either of us ſpoke. Paſſion had ty'd her Tongue, and Amazement mine. — In ſhort, the Conſequence was thus: She omitted Nothing that the moſt violent Love could urge, or tender

Words expreſs; which when ſhe ſaw had no Effect, but ſtill I pleaded Honor and Nearneſs of Blood to my Uncle; then came the Storm I fear'd at firſt: For, ſtarting from my Bed-ſide like a Fury, ſhe flew to my Sword, and with much ado I prevented her doing me or herſelf a Miſchief: Having diſarm'd her, in a Guſt of Paſſion ſhe left me, and in a Reſolution, confirm'd by a thouſand Curſes, not to cloſe her Eyes, 'till they had ſeen my Ruin.

CARELESS.

Exquiſite Woman! But what the Devil, does ſhe think thou haſt no more Senſe, than to get an Heir upon her Body to diſinherit thyſelf: For as I take it, this Settlement upon you, is, with a Proviſo, that your Uncle have no Children.

MELLEFONT.

It is ſo. Well, the Service you are to do me, will be a Pleaſure to yourſelf: I muſt get you to engage my Lady *Plyant* all this Evening, that my pious Aunt may not work her to her Intereſt. And if you chance to ſecure her to yourſelf, you may incline her to mine. She's handſome, and knows it; is very ſilly, and thinks ſhe has Senſe, and has an old fond Huſband.

CARE-

CARELESS.

I confeſs, a very fair Foundation, for a Lover to build upon.

MELLEFONT.

For my Lord *Froth*, he and his Wife will be ſufficiently taken up, with admiring one another, and *Briſk*'s Gallantry, as they call it. I'll obſerve my Uncle myſelf; and *Jack Maſkwell* has promiſed me, to watch my Aunt narrowly, and give me Notice upon any Suſpicion. As for Sir *Paul*, my wife Father in Law that is to be, my dear *Cynthia* has ſuch a Share in his Fatherly Fondneſs, he would ſcarce make her a Moment uneaſy, to have her happy hereafter.

CARELESS.

So, you have mann'd your Works: But I wiſh you may not have the weakeſt Guard, where the Enemy is ſtrongeſt.

MELLEFONT.

Maſkwell, you mean; prithee why ſhould you ſuſpect him?

CARELESS.

Faith I cannot help it, you know I never lik'd him; I am a little ſuperſtitious in Phyſiognomy.

MELLEFONT.

He has Obligations of Gratitude, to

bind him to me; his Dependance upon my Uncle is through my Means.

CARELESS.

Upon your Aunt, you mean.

MELLEFONT.

My Aunt!

CARELESS.

I'm miſtaken if there be not a Familiarity between them, you do not ſuſpect: Notwithſtanding her Paſſion for you.

MELLEFONT.

Pooh, pooh, Nothing in the World but his Deſign to do me Service; and he endeavours to be well in her Eſteem, that he may be able to effect it.

CARELESS.

Well, I ſhall be glad to be miſtaken; but, your Aunt's Averſion in her Revenge, cannot be any Way ſo effectually ſhown, as in bringing forth a Child to diſinherit you. She is handſome and cunning, and naturally wanton. *Maſkwell* is Fleſh and Blood at beſt, and Opportunities between them are frequent. His Affection to you, you have confeſſed, is grounded upon his Intereſt; that you have tranſplanted; and ſhould it take Root in my Lady, I don't ſee what you can expect from the Fruit.

MEL-

MELLEFONT.

I confeſs the Conſequence is viſible, were your Suſpicions juſt — But ſee, the Company is broke up, let's meet 'em.

SCENE IV.

[*To them*] *Lord* TOUCHWOOD, *Lord* FROTH, *Sir* PAUL PLYANT, BRISK.

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

OUT upon't, Nephew — Leave your Father in Law, and me, to maintain our Ground againſt young People.

MELLEFONT.

I beg your Lordſhip's Pardon —— We were juſt returning. ——

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

Were you, Son? Gadſbud much better as it is—Good, ſtrange! I ſwear I'm almoſt tipſy—t'other Bottle would have been too powerful for me, —— as ſure as can be it would.—We wanted your Company: But Mr. *Briſk*—Where is he? I ſwear and vow, he's a moſt facetious Perſon—and the beſt Company.——And, my Lord *Froth*, your Lordſhip is ſo merry a Man, he! he! he!

Lord FROTH.

O foy, Sir *Paul*, what do you mean?

Merry! O barbarous! I'd as lieve you call'd me Fool.

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

Nay, I proteſt and vow now, 'tis true; when Mr. *Briſk* jokes, your Lordſhip's Laugh does ſo become you, he! he! he!

Lord FROTH.

Ridiculous! Sir *Paul,* you're ſtrangely miſtaken. I find Champagne is powerful. I aſſure you, Sir *Paul,* I laugh at no Body's Jeſt but my own, or a Lady's; I aſſure you, Sir *Paul.*

BRISK.

How? how, my Lord? what, affront my Wit? Let me periſh, do I never ſay any Thing worthy to be laugh'd at?

Lord FROTH.

O foy, don't miſapprehend me, I don't ſay ſo, for I often ſmile at your Conceptions. But there is Nothing more unbecoming a Man of Quality, than to Laugh; 'tis ſuch a vulgar Expreſſion of the Paſſion! every Body can laugh. Then eſpecially to laugh at the Jeſt of an inferior Perſon, or when any Body elſe of the ſame Quality does not laugh with one; ridiculous! To be pleaſed with what pleaſes the Crowd! Now when I laugh, I always laugh alone.

BRISK.

BRISK.

I ſuppoſe that's becauſe you laugh at your own Jeſts, i'Gad, ha! ha! ha!

Lord FROTH.

He! he! I ſwear tho', your Rallery provokes me to a Smile.

BRISK.

Ay, my Lord, it's a Sign I hit you in the Teeth, if you ſhow 'em.

Lord FROTH.

He! he! he! I ſwear that's ſo very pretty, I can't forbear.

CARELESS.

I find a Quibble bears more Sway in your Lordſhip's Face, than a Jeſt.

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

Sir *Paul,* if you pleaſe we'll retire to the Ladies, and drink a Diſh of Tea, to ſettle our Heads.

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

With all my Heart. — Mr. *Briſk,* you'll come to us, — or call me when you joke, I'll be ready to laugh incontinently.

SCENE V.

MELLEFONT, CARELESS, *Lord* FROTH, BRISK.

MELLEFONT.

BUT does your Lordſhip never ſee Comedies?

Lord FROTH.

O yes, ſometimes,—But I never laugh.

MELLEFONT.

No?

Lord FROTH.

Oh, no,——Never laugh indeed, Sir.

CARELESS.

No! why what d'ye go there for?

Lord FROTH.

To diſtinguiſh myſelf from the Commonalty, and mortify the Poets; the Fellows grow ſo conceited, when any of their fooliſh Wit prevails upon the Side-Boxes.—I ſwear,—he! he! he! I have often conſtrain'd my Inclinations to laugh,—he! he! he! to avoid giving them Encouragement.

MELLEFONT.

You are cruel to yourſelf, my Lord, as well as malicious to them.

Lord

Lord FROTH.

I confeſs I did myſelf ſome Violence at firſt, but now I think I have conquer'd it.

BRISK.

Let me periſh, my Lord, but there is Something very particular in the Humor; 'tis true, it makes againſt Wit, and I'm ſorry for ſome Friends of mine that write, but—i'Gad, I love to be malicious.—Nay, Deuce take me there's Wit in't too—And Wit muſt be foil'd by Wit; cut a Diamond with a Diamond; no other Way, i'Gad.

Lord FROTH.

Oh, I thought you would not be long, before you found out the Wit.

CARELESS.

Wit! In what? Where the Devil's the Wit, in not laughing when a Man has a Mind to't.

BRISK.

O Lord, why can't you find it out?—Why there 'tis, in the not laughing——Don't you apprehend me?—My Lord, *Careleſs* is a very honeſt Fellow, but harkee,—you underſtand me, ſomewhat heavy, a little ſhallow, or ſo.——Why I'll tell you now: Suppoſe now you come up to me—Nay, prithee *Careleſs* be inſtructed. Suppoſe, as I was ſaying, you come up to me holding

holding your Sides, and laughing, as if you would—Well—I look grave, and aſk the Cauſe of this immoderate Mirth.——— You laugh on ſtill, and are not able to tell me— Still I look grave, not ſo much as ſmile.———

CARELESS.

Smile, no, what the Devil ſhould you ſmile at, when you ſuppoſe I can't tell you?

BRISK.

Pſhaw, pſhaw, prithee don't interrupt me—But I tell you, you ſhall tell me— at laſt——— But it ſhall be a great While firſt.

CARELESS.

Well, but prithee don't let it be a great While, becauſe I long to have it over.

BRISK.

Well then, you tell me ſome good Jeſt, or very witty Thing, laughing all the While as if you were ready to die— and I hear it, and look thus.—Would not you be diſappointed?

CARELESS.

No; for if it were a witty Thing, I ſhould not expect you to underſtand it.

Lord FROTH.

O foy, Mr. *Careleſs,* all the World allows Mr.

Mr. *Briſk* to have Wit; my Wife ſays, he has a great deal. I hope you think her a Judge.

BRISK.

Pooh, my Lord, his Voice goes for Nothing. —— I can't tell how to make him apprehend.—Take it t'other Way. Suppoſe I ſay a witty Thing to you?

CARELESS.

Then I ſhall be diſappointed indeed.

MELLEFONT.

Let him alone, *Briſk*, he is obſtinately bent not to be inſtructed.

BRISK.

I'm ſorry for him, the Deuce take me.

MELLEFONT.

Shall we go to the Ladies, my Lord?

Lord FROTH.

With all my Heart, methinks we are a Solitude without 'em.

MELLEFONT.

Or, what ſay you, to another Bottle of Champagne?

Lord FROTH.

O, for the Univerſe, not a Drop more I beſeech you. Oh Intemperate! I have a Fluſhing in my Face already.

[*Takes out a Pocket-Glaſs, and looks in it.*

BRISK.

BRISK.

Let me ſee, let me ſee, my Lord, I broke my Glaſs that was in the Lid of my Snuff-Box. Hum! Deuce take me, I have encourag'd a Pimple here too.

[*Takes the Glaſs and looks.*

Lord FROTH.

Then you muſt mortify him with a Patch; my Wife ſhall ſupply you. Come, Gentlemen, *allons,* here is Company coming.

SCENE VI.

Lady TOUCHWOOD, MASKWELL.

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

I'LL hear no more. — Y'are falſe and ungrateful; come, I know you falſe.

MASKWELL.

I have been frail, I confeſs, Madam, for your Ladyſhip's Service.

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

That I ſhould truſt a Man, whom I had known betray his Friend!

MASKWELL.

What Friend have I betray'd? Or to whom?

Lady

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

Your fond Friend *Mellefont,* and to me; can you deny it?

MASKWELL.

I do not.

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

Have you not wrong'd my Lord, who has been a Father to you in your Wants, and given you Being? Have you not wrong'd him in the higheſt Manner, in his Bed?

MASKWELL.

With your Ladyſhip's Help, and for your Service, as I told you before. I can't deny that neither. —— Any Thing more, Madam?

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

More! Audacious Villain. O, what's more, is moſt my Shame, —— Have you not diſhonor'd me?

MASKWELL.

No, that I deny; for I never told in all my Life: So that Accuſation's anſwer'd; on to the next.

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

Death, do you dally with my Paſſion? Inſolent Devil! But have a Care, — Provoke me not; for, by the Eternal Fire, you ſhall not 'ſcape my Vengeance.——

Calm

Calm Villain! How unconcern'd he ſtands, confeſſing Treachery, and Ingratitude! Is there a Vice more black! O I have Excuſes, thouſands, for my Faults; Fire in my Temper, Paſſions in my Soul, apt to ev'ry Provocation; oppreſſed at once with Love, and with Deſpair. But a ſedate, a thinking Villain, whoſe black Blood runs temperately bad, what Excuſe can clear?

MASKWELL.

Will you be in Temper, Madam? I would not talk not to be heard. I have been [*She walks about diſorder'd*] a very great Rogue for your Sake, and you reproach me with it; I am ready to be a Rogue ſtill, to do you Service; and you are flinging Conſcience and Honor in my Face, to rebate my Inclinations. How am I to behave myſelf? You know I am your Creature, my Life and Fortune in your Power; to diſoblige you, brings me certain Ruin. Allow it, I would betray you; I would not be a Traitor to myſelf: I don't pretend to Honeſty, becauſe you know I am a Raſcal: But I would convince you, from the Neceſſity of my being firm to you.

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

Neceſſity, Impudence! Can no Gratitude

tude incline you, no Obligations touch you? Have not my Fortune, and my Perſon, been ſubjected to your Pleaſure? Were you not in the Nature of a Servant, and have not I in Effect made you Lord of all, of me, and of my Lord? Where is that humble Love, the Languiſhing, that Adoration, which once was paid me, and everlaſtingly engaged?

MASKWELL.

Fix'd, rooted in my Heart, whence Nothing can remove 'em, yet you——

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

Yet, what yet?

MASKWELL.

Nay, miſconceive me not, Madam, when I ſay I have had a gen'rous, and a faithful Paſſion, which you had never favor'd, but through Revenge and Policy.

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

Ha!

MASKWELL.

Look you, Madam, we are alone,—— Pray contain yourſelf, and hear me. You know you lov'd your Nephew, when I firſt ſigh'd for you; I quickly found it; an Argument that I lov'd; for with that Art you veil'd your Paſſion, 'twas imperceptible to all but jealous Eyes. This Diſcovery

very made me bold; I confeſs it; for by it, I thought you in my Power. Your Nephew's Scorn of you, added to my Hopes; I watch'd the Occaſion, and took you, juſt repulſed by him, warm at once with Love and Indignation; your Diſpoſition, my Arguments, and happy Opportunity, accompliſh'd my Deſign; I preſs'd the yielding Minute, and was bleſs'd. How I have lov'd you ſince, Words have not ſhown, then how ſhould Words expreſs?

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

Well, mollifying Devil! — And have I not met your Love with forward Fire?

MASKWELL.

Your Zeal I grant was ardent, but miſplac'd; there was Revenge in View; that Woman's Idol had defil'd the Temple of the God, and Love was made a Mock-Worſhip. — A Son and Heir would have edg'd young *Mellefont* upon the Brink of Ruin, and left him none but you to catch at for Prevention.

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

Again, provoke me! Do you wind me like a Larum, only to rouſe my own ſtill'd Soul for your Diverſion? Confuſion!

MASK-

MASKWELL.

Nay, Madam, I'm gone, if you relapſe. — What needs this? I ſay Nothing but what you yourſelf, in open Hours of Love, have told me. Why ſhould you deny it? Nay, how can you? Is not all this preſent Heat owing to the ſame Fire? Do you not love him ſtill? How have I this Day offended you, but in not breaking off his Match with *Cynthia?* Which ere to Morrow ſhall be done —— had you but Patience.

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

How, what ſaid you, *Maſkwell?*—Another Caprice to unwind my Temper?

MASKWELL.

By Heav'n, no; I am your Slave, the Slave of all your Pleaſures; and will not reſt 'till I have given you Peace, would you ſuffer me.

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

O, *Maſkwell,* in vain do I diſguiſe me from thee; thou know'ſt me, knoweſt the very inmoſt Windings and Receſſes of my Soul.—— Oh *Mellefont!* I burn; married to Morrow! Deſpair ſtrikes me. Yet my Soul knows I hate him too: Let him but once be mine, and next immediate Ruin ſeize him.

MASKWELL.

Compoſe yourſelf, you ſhall poſſeſs and ruin him too; —— Will that pleaſe you?

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

How, how? Thou dear, thou precious Villain, how?

MASKWELL.

You have already been tampering with my Lady *Plyant.*

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

I have: She is ready for any Impreſſion I think fit.

MASKWELL.

She muſt be thoroughly perſuaded, that *Mellefont* loves her.

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

She is ſo credulous that Way naturally, and likes him ſo well, that ſhe will believe it faſter than I can perſuade her. But I don't ſee what you can propoſe from ſuch a trifling Deſign; for her firſt converſing with *Mellefont,* will convince her of the contrary.

MASKWELL.

I know it.—I don't depend upon it.—But it will prepare Something elſe; and gain us Leiſure to lay a ſtronger Plot: If

I

I gain a little Time, I ſhall not want Contrivance.

One Minute gives Invention to deſtroy,
What, to rebuild, will a whole Age employ.

End of the Firſt Act.

ACT II. SCENE I.

Lady FROTH, CYNTHIA.

CYNTHIA.

INDEED, Madam! Is it poſſible your Ladyſhip could have been ſo much in Love?

Lady FROTH.

I could not ſleep; I did not ſleep one Wink for three Weeks together.

CYNTHIA.

Prodigious! I wonder, Want of Sleep, and ſo much Love, and ſo much Wit as your Ladyſhip has, did not turn your Brain.

Lady FROTH.

O my dear *Cynthia,* you muſt not rally your Friend,——But really, as you ſay, I wonder too, — But then I had a Way.— For between you and I, I had Whimſies and Vapors, but I gave them Vent.

CYNTHIA.

How pray, Madam?

Lady FROTH.

O I writ, writ abundantly. — Do you never write?

CYN-

CYNTHIA.

Write, what?

Lady FROTH.

Songs, Elegies, Satires, Encomiums, Panegyrics, Lampoons, Plays, or Heroic Poems.

CYNTHIA.

O Lord, not I, Madam; I'm content to be a courteous Reader.

Lady FROTH.

O inconſiſtent! In Love, and not write! If my Lord and I had been both of your Temper, we had never come together.—O bleſs me! What a ſad Thing would that have been, if my Lord and I ſhould never have met!

CYNTHIA.

Then neither my Lord nor you would ever have met with your Match, on my Conſcience.

Lady FROTH.

O'my Conſcience no more we ſhould; thou ſay'ſt right—For ſure my Lord *Froth* is as fine a Gentleman, and as much a Man of Quality! Ah! Nothing at all of the common Air, — I think I may ſay he wants Nothing, but a blue Ribbon and a Star, to make him ſhine the very Phoſphorus of our Hemiſphere. Do you underſtand thoſe

two hard Words? If you don't, I'll explain 'em to you.

CYNTHIA.

Yes, yes, Madam, I'm not ſo ignorant. —At leaſt I won't own it, to be troubled with your Inſtructions. [*Aſide.*

Lady FROTH.

Nay, I beg your Pardon; but being deriv'd from the *Greek,* I thought you might have eſcap'd the Etymology. —But I'm the more amaz'd, to find you a Woman of Letters, and not write! Bleſs me! how can *Mellefont* believe you love him?

CYNTHIA.

Why Faith, Madam, he that won't take my Word, ſhall never have it under my Hand.

Lady FROTH.

I vow *Mellefont*'s a pretty Gentleman, but methinks he wants a Manner.

CYNTHIA.

A Manner! What's that, Madam?

Lady FROTH.

Some diſtinguiſhing Quality, as for Example, the *belle Air* or *Brillant* of Mr. *Briſk;* the Solemnity, yet Complaiſance of my Lord, or Something of his own that ſhould look a little *Je-ne-ſcay-quoi;* he is too much a Mediocrity, in my Mind.

CYN-

CYNTHIA.

He does not indeed affect either Pertneſs or Formality; for which I like him: Here he comes.

Lady FROTH.

And my Lord with him: Pray obſerve the Difference.

SCENE II.

[*To them*] *Lord* FROTH, MELLEFONT, *and* BRISK.

CYNTHIA.

IMPERTINENT Creature! I could almoſt be angry with her now. [*Aſide.*

Lady FROTH.

My Lord, I have been telling *Cynthia,* how much I have been in Love with you; I ſwear I have; I'm not aſham'd to own it now; Ah! it makes my Heart leap, I vow I ſigh when I think on't: My dear Lord! Ha! ha! ha! do you remember, my Lord?

[*Squeezes him by the Hand, looks kindly on him, ſighs, and then laughs out.*

Lord FROTH.

Pleaſant Creature! perfectly well: ah! that Look, ay, there it is; who could reſiſt?

'twas ſo my Heart was made a Captive firſt, and ever ſince t'has been in Love with happy Slavery.

Lady FROTH.

O that Tongue, that dear deceitful Tongue! that charming Softneſs in your Mien and your Expreſſion, and then your Bow! Good my Lord, bow as you did when I gave you my Picture; here, ſuppoſe this my Picture—

[*Gives him a Pocket-Glaſs.*

Pray mind my Lord; ah! he bows charmingly; nay, my Lord, you ſhan't kiſs it ſo much; I ſhall grow jealous, I vow now.

[*He bows profoundly low, then kiſſes the Glaſs.*

Lord FROTH.

I ſaw myſelf there, and kiſs'd it for your Sake.

Lady FROTH.

Ah! Gallantry to the laſt Degree—— Mr. *Briſk*, you're a Judge; was ever any Thing ſo well bred as my Lord?

BRISK.

Never any Thing, but your Ladyſhip, let me periſh.

Lady FROTH.

O prettily turn'd again; let me die but you have a great deal of Wit: Mr. *Melle-*

font,

ſont, don't you think Mr. *Briſk* has a World of Wit?

MELLEFONT.

O, yes, Madam.

BRISK.

O dear, Madam——

Lady FROTH.

An infinite deal!

BRISK.

O Heav'ns, Madam——

Lady FROTH.

More Wit than any Body.

BRISK.

I'm everlaſtingly your humble Servant, Deuce take me, Madam.

Lord FROTH.

Don't you think us a happy Couple?

CYNTHIA.

I vow, my Lord, I think you the happieſt Couple in the World; for you're not only happy in one another, and when you are together, but happy in yourſelves, and by yourſelves.

Lord FROTH.

I hope *Mellefont* will make a good Huſband too.

CYNTHIA.

'Tis my Intereſt to believe he will, my Lord.

Lord

Lord FROTH.

D'ye think he'll love you as well as I do my Wife? I'm afraid not.

CYNTHIA.

I believe he'll love me better.

Lord FROTH.

Heav'ns! that can never be; but why do you think ſo?

CYNTHIA.

Becauſe he has not ſo much Reaſon to be fond of himſelf.

Lord FROTH.

O your humble Servant for that, dear Madam; well, *Mellefont*, you'll be a happy Creature.

MELLEFONT.

Ay, my Lord, I ſhall have the ſame Reaſon for my Happineſs that your Lordſhip has, I ſhall think myſelf happy.

Lord FROTH.

Ah, that's all.

BRISK. [*to Lady* Froth.]

Your Ladyſhip is in the right; but i'Gad I'm wholly turn'd into Satire. I confeſs I write but ſeldom, but when I do—keen *Iambics* i'Gad. But my Lord was telling me, your Ladyſhip has made an Eſſay towards an Heroic Poem.

Lady

Lady FROTH.

Did my Lord tell you? Yes, I vow, and the Subject is my Lord's Love to me. And what do you think I call it? I dare ſwear you won't gueſs —— *The Sillabub,* ha! ha! ha!

BRISK.

Becauſe my Lord's Title's *Froth,* i'Gad, ha! ha! ha! Deuce take me, very *à Propos* and ſurpriſing, ha! ha! ha!

Lady FROTH.

He, ay, is not it?—And then I call my Lord *Spumoſo;* and myſelf, what d'ye think I call myſelf?

BRISK.

Lactilla may be, —'Gad I cannot tell.

Lady FROTH.

Biddy, that's all; juſt my own Name.

BRISK.

Biddy! i'Gad very pretty—Deuce take me if your Ladyſhip has not the Art of ſurpriſing the moſt naturally in the World, —I hope you'll make me happy in communicating the Poem.

Lady FROTH.

O, you muſt be my Confident, I muſt aſk your Advice.

BRISK.

I'm your humble Servant, let me periſh, —I

——I preſume your Ladyſhip has read *Boſſu?*

Lady FROTH.

O yes, and *Rapin*, and *Dacier* upon *Ariſtotle* and *Horace*.—My Lord, you muſt not be jealous, I'm communicating all to Mr. *Briſk*.

Lord FROTH.

No, no, I'll allow Mr. *Briſk*; have you Nothing about you to ſhow him, my Dear?

Lady FROTH.

Yes, I believe I have.—— Mr. *Briſk*, come, will you go into the next Room? and there I'll ſhow you what I have.

Lord FROTH.

I'll walk a Turn in the Garden, and come to you.

SCENE III.

MELLEFONT, CYNTHIA.

MELLEFONT.

YOU're thoughtful, *Cynthia?*

CYNTHIA.

I'm thinking, tho' Marriage makes Man and Wife one Fleſh, it leaves 'em ſtill two Fools; and they become more conſpicuous by ſetting off one another.

MELLE-

MELLEFONT.

That's only when two Fools meet, and their Follies are oppos'd.

CYNTHIA.

Nay, I have known two Wits meet, and by the Oppoſition of their Wit, render themſelves as ridiculous as Fools. 'Tis an odd Game we're going to Play at: What think you of drawing Stakes, and giving over in Time?

MELLEFONT.

No, hang't, that's not endeavouring to win, becauſe it's poſſible we may loſe; ſince we have ſhuffled and cut, let's e'en turn up Trump now.

CYNTHIA.

Then I find it's like Cards, if either of us have a good Hand it is an Accident of Fortune.

MELLEFONT.

No, Marriage is rather like a Game at Bowls, Fortune indeed makes the Match, and the two neareſt, and ſometimes the two fartheſt, are together, but the Game depends entirely upon Judgment.

CYNTHIA.

Still it is a Game, and conſequently one of us muſt be a Loſer.

MEL-

MELLEFONT.

Not at all; only a friendly Trial of Skill, and the Winnings to be laid out in an Entertainment. — What's here, the Muſic?— Oh, my Lord has promiſed the Company a new Song, we'll get 'em to give it us by the Way. [*Muſicians croſſing the Stage.* Pray let us have the Favor of you, to practiſe the Song, before the Company hear it.

SONG.

I.

CYNTHIA *frowns whene'er I woo her,*
Yet ſhe's vext if I give over;
Much ſhe fears I ſhould undo her,
But much more to loſe her Lover:
Thus, in doubting, ſhe refuſes;
And not winning, thus ſhe loſes.

II.

Prithee Cynthia *look behind you,*
Age and Wrinkles will o'ertake you;
Then too late Deſire will find you,
When the Power muſt forſake you:
Think, O think o'th' ſad Condition,
To be paſt, yet wiſh Fruition.

MELLEFONT.

You ſhall have my Thanks below.

[*To the Muſic, they go out.*

SCENE

SCENE IV.

[*To them*] *Sir* PAUL PLYANT *and Lady* PLYANT.

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

GADS bud! I am provok'd into a Fermentation, as my Lady *Froth* ſays; was ever the like read of in Story?

Lady PLYANT.

Sir *Paul*, have Patience, let me alone to rattle him up.

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

Pray your Ladyſhip give me Leave to be angry — I'll rattle him up I warrant you, I'll firk him with a *Certiorari*.

Lady PLYANT.

You firk him! I'll firk him myſelf; pray Sir *Paul* hold you contented.

CYNTHIA.

Bleſs me, what makes my Father in ſuch a Paſſion!—I never ſaw him thus before.

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

Hold yourſelf contented, my Lady *Plyant*,——I find Paſſion coming upon me by Inflation, and I cannot ſubmit as formerly, therefore give Way.

Lady

Lady PLYANT.

How now! will you be pleaſed to retire, and ——

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

No marry will I not be pleaſed, I am pleaſed to be angry, that's my Pleaſure at this Time.

MELLEFONT.

What can this mean!

Lady PLYANT.

Gads my Life, the Man's diſtracted; why how now, who are you? What am I? Slidikins can't I govern you? What did I marry you for? Am I not to be abſolute and uncontrolable? Is it fit a Woman of my Spirit, and Conduct, ſhould be contradicted in a Matter of this Concern?

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

It concerns me, and only me;—Beſides, I'm not to be govern'd at all Times. When I am in Tranquility, my Lady *Plyant* ſhall command Sir *Paul;* but when I am provok'd to Fury, I cannot incorporate with Patience and Reaſon, —— as ſoon may Tigers match with Tigers, Lambs with Lambs, and every Creature couple with its Foe, as the Poet ſays. ——

Lady PLYANT.

He's hot-headed ſtill! 'Tis in vain to talk

talk to you; but remember I have a Curtain-Lecture for you, you diſobedient, headſtrong Brute.

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

No, 'tis becauſe I won't be Headſtrong, becauſe I won't be a Brute, and have my Head fortified, that I am thus exaſperated.—But I will protect my Honor, and yonder is the Violator of my Fame.

Lady PLYANT.

'Tis my Honor that is concern'd, and the Violation was intended to me. Your Honor! You have none but what is in my Keeping, and I can diſpoſe of it when I pleaſe—therefore don't provoke me.

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

Hum, Gads-bud ſhe ſays true — Well, my Lady, march on, I will fight under you then: I am convinced, as far as Paſſion will permit.

[*Lady* Plyant *and Sir* Paul *come up to* Mellefont.

Lady PLYANT.

Inhuman and treacherous.——

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

Thou Serpent and firſt Tempter of Womankind. ——

CYNTHIA.

Bleſs me! Sir; Madam; what mean you?

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

Thy, Thy, come away *Thy,* touch him not, come hither Girl, go not near him, there's Nothing but Deceit about him; Snakes are in his Peruke, and the Crocodile of *Nilus* in his Belly; he will eat thee up alive.

Lady PLYANT.

Diſhonorable, impudent Creature!

MELLEFONT.

For Heaven's Sake, Madam, to whom do you direct this Language?

Lady PLYANT.

Have I behav'd myſelf with all the Decorum and Nicety, befitting the Perſon of Sir *Paul*'s Wife? Have I preſerv'd my Honor as it were in a Snow-Houſe for theſe three Years paſt? Have I been white and unſully'd even by Sir *Paul* himſelf?

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

Nay, ſhe has been an invincible Wife, even to me, that's the Truth on't.

Lady PLYANT.

Have I, I ſay, preſerv'd myſelf, like a fair Sheet of Paper, for you to make a Blot upon? ——

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

And ſhe ſhall make a Simile with any Woman in *England.*

MEL-

MELLEFONT.

I am ſo amaz'd, I know not what to ſay.

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

Do you think my Daughter, this pretty Creature; Gads-bud ſhe's a Wife for a Cherubim! Do you think her fit for Nothing but to be a ſtalking Horſe, to ſtand before you, while you take aim at my Wife? Gads-bud I was never angry before in my Life, and I'll never be appeas'd again.

MELLEFONT.

Hell and Damnation! This is my Aunt; ſuch Malice can be engender'd no where elſe. [*Aſide.*

Lady PLYANT.

Sir *Paul,* take *Cynthia* from his Sight; leave me to ſtrike him with the Remorſe of his intended Crime.

CYNTHIA.

Pray, Sir, ſtay, hear him, I dare affirm he's innocent.

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

Innocent! Why hark'ye, come hither *Thy,* hark'ye, I had it from his Aunt, my Siſter *Touchwood,* — Gads-bud he does not care a Farthing for any Thing of thee, but thy Portion; why he's in Love with my Wife; he would have tantalis'd thee, and made a Cuckold of thy poor Father, ——

and that would certainly have broke my Heart —— I'm ſure if ever I ſhould have Horns, they would kill me; they would never come kindly, I ſhould die of 'em, like a Child that was cutting his Teeth— I ſhould indeed, *Thy* —— therefore come away; but Providence has prevented all, therefore come away, when I bid you.

CYNTHIA.

I muſt obey.

SCENE V.

Lady PLYANT, MELLEFONT.

Lady PLYANT.

O Such a Thing! the Impiety of it ſtartles me—to wrong ſo good, ſo fair a Creature, and one that loves you tenderly—'tis a Barbarity of Barbarities, and Nothing could be guilty of it ——

MELLEFONT.

But the greateſt Villain Imagination can form, I grant it; and next to the Villany of ſuch a Fact, is the Villany of aſperſing me with the Guilt. How? which Way was I to wrong her? For yet I underſtand you not.

Lady

Lady PLYANT.

Why, Gad's my Life, Couſin *Mellefont,* you cannot be ſo peremptory as to deny it; when I tax you with it to your Face; for now Sir *Paul*'s gone, you are *Corum Nobus.*

MELLEFONT.

By Heav'n, I love her more than Life, or ——

Lady PLYANT.

Fiddle, faddle, don't tell me of this and that, and ev'ry Thing in the World, but give me Mathemacular Demonſtration, anſwer me directly —— But I have not Patience — Oh! the Impiety of it, as I was ſaying, and the unparallel'd Wickedneſs! O merciful Father! How could you think to reverſe Nature ſo, to make the Daughter the Means of procuring the Mother?

MELLEFONT.

The Daughter to procure the Mother!

Lady PLYANT.

Ay, for tho' I am not *Cynthia*'s own Mother, I am her Father's Wife; and that's near enough to make it Inceſt.

MELLEFONT.

Inceſt! O my precious Aunt, and the Devil in Conjunction. [*Aſide.*

Lady PLYANT.

O reflect upon the Horror of that, and then the Guilt of deceiving every Body; marrying the Daughter, only to make a Cuckold of the Father; and then ſeducing me, debauching my Purity, and perverting me from the Road of Virtue, in which I have trod thus long, and never made one Trip, not one *faux pas;* O conſider it, what would you have to anſwer for, if you ſhould provoke me to Frailty? Alas! Humanity is feeble, Heav'n knows! very feeble, and unable to ſupport itſelf.

MELLEFONT.

Where am I? Is it Day? and am I awake? Madam—

Lady PLYANT.

And no Body knows how Circumſtances may happen together—To my Thinking, now I could reſiſt the ſtrongeſt Temptation, — But yet I know, 'tis impoſſible for me to know whether I could or not; there's no Certainty in the Things of this Life.

MELLEFONT.

Madam, pray give me Leave to aſk you one Queſtion.——

Lady PLYANT.

O Lord, aſk me the Queſtion! I'll ſwear I'll

I'll refuſe it; I ſwear I'll deny it — therefore don't aſk me, nay you ſhan't aſk me, I ſwear I'll deny it. O Gemini, you have brought all the Blood into my Face; I warrant I am as red as a Turkey-Cock; O fy, Couſin *Mellefont!*

MELLEFONT.

Nay, Madam, hear me; I mean ——

Lady PLYANT.

Hear you, no, no; I'll deny you firſt, and hear you afterwards. For one does not know how one's Mind may change upon Hearing. —— Hearing is one of the Senſes, and all the Senſes are fallible; I won't truſt my Honor, I aſſure you; my Honor is infallible and uncomatible.

MELLEFONT.

For Heav'n's Sake, Madam, ——

Lady PLYANT.

O name it no more —— Bleſs me, how can you talk of Heav'n! and have ſo much Wickedneſs in your Heart? May be you don't think it a Sin — They ſay ſome of you Gentlemen don't think it a Sin —— May be it is no Sin to them that don't think it ſo; indeed, if I did not think it a Sin — But ſtill my Honor, if it were no Sin, — But then, to marry my Daughter, for the Conveniency of frequent Oppor-

tunities,——I'll never conſent to that; as ſure as can be, I'll break the Match.

MELLEFONT.

Death and Amazement! ——Madam, upon my Knees ——

Lady PLYANT.

Nay, nay, riſe up, come you ſhall ſee my Good-nature. I know Love is powerful, and no Body can help his Paſſion: 'Tis not your Fault; nor I ſwear it is not mine. —— How can I help it, if I have Charms? And how can you help it, if you are made a Captive? I ſwear it is Pity it ſhould be a Fault——But my Honor, ——well, but your Honor too——but the Sin! ——well, but the Neceſſity——O Lord, here's ſome Body coming, I dare not ſtay. Well, you muſt conſider of your Crime; and ſtrive as much as can be againſt it,——ſtrive, be ſure——But don't be melancholic, don't deſpair,——But never think that I'll grant you any Thing; O Lord, no;——But be ſure you lay aſide all Thoughts of the Marriage, for tho' I know you don't love *Cynthia,* only as a Blind for your Paſſion to me; yet it will make me jealous ——O Lord, what did I ſay? Jealous! no, no, I can't be jealous, for I muſt not love you,——therefore don't hope——But don't

deſpair

deſpair neither.——O, they're coming, I muſt fly.

SCENE VI.

MELLEFONT *alone.*

MELLEFONT *(after a Pauſe.)*

SO then,— ſpite of my Care and Foreſight, I am caught, caught in my Security.— Yet this was but a ſhallow Artifice, unworthy of my Matchiavilian Aunt: There muſt be more behind; this is but the firſt Flaſh, the Priming of her Engine; Deſtruction follows hard, if not moſt preſently prevented.

SCENE VII.

[*To him*] MASKWELL.

MELLEFONT.

MASKWELL, welcome; thy Preſence is a View of Land, appearing to my ſhipwreck'd Hopes: The Witch has rais'd the Storm, and her Miniſters have done their Work; you ſee the Veſſels are parted. MASK-

MASKWELL.

I know it; I met Sir *Paul* towing away *Cynthia:* Come, trouble not your Head, I'll join you together ere to Morrow Morning, or drown between you in the Attempt.

MELLEFONT.

There's Comfort in a Hand ſtretch'd out, to one that's ſinking; tho' ne'er ſo far off.

MASKWELL.

No ſinking, nor no Danger, — Come, chear up; why you don't know, that while I plead for you, your Aunt has given me a retaining Fee;——Nay, I am your greateſt Enemy, and ſhe does but Journey-Work under me.

MELLEFONT.

Ha! How's this?

MASKWELL.

What d'ye think of my being employ'd in the Execution of all her Plots? Ha! ha! ha! by Heav'n it's true; I have undertaken to break the Match, I have undertaken to make your Uncle diſinherit you, to get you turn'd out of Doors; and to——Ha! ha! ha! I can't tell you for Laughing,—Oh ſhe has open'd her Heart to me,—I am to turn you a Grazing, and to — Ha! ha! ha! marry *Cynthia* myſelf; there's a Plot for you. MEL-

MELLEFONT.

Ha! O I ſee, I ſee my riſing Sun! Light breaks thro' Clouds upon me, and I ſhall live in Day—O my *Maſkwell!* How ſhall I thank or praiſe thee? Thou haſt out-witted Woman. — But tell me, how could'ſt thou thus get into her Confidence? —— Ha? How? But was it her Contrivance to perſuade my Lady *Plyant* to this extravagant Belief?

MASKWELL.

It was; and, to tell you the Truth, I encourag'd it for your Diverſion: Tho' it made you a little uneaſy for the preſent, yet the Reflection of it muſt needs be entertaining — I warrant ſhe was very violent at firſt.

MELLEFONT.

Ha! ha! ha! ay, a very Fury; but I was moſt afraid of her Violence at laſt.—If you had not come as you did; I don't know what ſhe might have attempted.

MASKWELL.

Ha! ha! ha! I know her Temper.—— Well, you muſt know then, that all my Contrivances were but Bubbles; 'till at laſt I pretended to have been long ſecretly in Love with *Cynthia;* that did my Buſineſs; that convinced your Aunt, I might be truſted;

truſted; ſince it was as much my Intereſt as hers to break the Match: Then, ſhe thought my Jealouſy might qualify me to aſſiſt her in her Revenge. And, in ſhort, in that Belief, told me the Secrets of her Heart. At length we made this Agreement; if I accompliſh her Deſigns (as I told you before) ſhe has engag'd to put *Cynthia* with all her Fortune into my Power.

MELLEFONT.

She is moſt gracious in her Favor — Well, and dear *Jack*, how haſt thou contrived?

MASKWELL.

I would not have you ſtay to hear it now; for I don't know, but ſhe may come this Way; I am to meet her anon; after that, I'll tell you the whole Matter; be here in this Gallery an Hour hence, by that Time I imagine our Conſultation may be over.

MELLEFONT.

I will; 'till then Succeſs attend thee.

SCENE

SCENE VIII.

MASKWELL *alone.*

'TILL then, Succeſs will attend me; for when I meet you, I meet the only Obſtacle to my Fortune. *Cynthia,* let thy Beauty gild my Crimes; and whatſoever I commit of Treachery or Deceit, ſhall be imputed to me as a Merit—— Treachery! what Treachery? Love cancels all the Bonds of Friendſhip, and ſets Men right upon their firſt Foundations.

Duty to Kings, Piety to Parents, Gratitude to Benefactors, and Fidelity to Friends, are different and particular Ties: But the Name of Rival cuts 'em all aſunder, and is a general Acquittance—Rival is equal, and Love like Death an univerſal Leveller of Mankind. Ha! But is there not ſuch a Thing as Honeſty? Yes; and whoſoever has it about him, bears an Enemy in his Breaſt: For your honeſt Man, as I take it, is that nice, ſcrupulous, conſcientious Perſon, who will cheat no Body but himſelf; ſuch another Coxcomb, as your wiſe Man, who is too hard for all the

the World, and will be made a Fool of by no Body, but himſelf: Ha! ha! ha! Well, for Wiſdom and Honeſty, give me Cunning and Hypocriſy; oh, 'tis ſuch a Pleaſure, to angle for fair-fac'd Fools! Then that hungry Gudgeon Credulity, will bite at any Thing — Why, let me ſee, I have the ſame Face, the ſame Words and Accents, when I ſpeak what I do think; and when I ſpeak what I do not think— the very ſame— and dear Diſſimulation is the only Art, not to be known from Nature.

Why will Mankind be Fools, and be deceiv'd?
And why are Friends and Lovers Oaths believ'd?
When, each, who ſearches ſtrictly his own Mind,
May ſo much Fraud and Power of Baſeneſs find.

End of the Second Act.

ACT

ACT III. SCENE I.

Lord TOUCHWOOD, *Lady* TOUCHWOOD.

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

MY Lord, can you blame my Brother *Plyant,* if he refuſe his Daughter upon this Provocation? The Contract's void by this unheard-of Impiety.

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

I don't believe it true; he has better Principles — Pho, 'tis Nonſenſe. Come, come, I know my Lady *Plyant* has a large Eye, and wou'd centre every Thing in her own Circle; 'tis not the firſt Time ſhe has miſtaken Reſpect for Love, and made Sir *Paul* jealous of the Civility of an undeſigning Perſon, the better to beſpeak his Security in her unfeigned Pleaſures.

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

You cenſure hardly, my Lord; my Siſter's Honor is very well known.

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

Yes, I believe I know ſome that have been familiarly acquainted with it. This

is

is a little Trick wrought by ſome pitiful Contriver, envious of my Nephew's Merit.

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

Nay, my Lord, it may be ſo, and I hope it will be found ſo: But that will require ſome Time; for in ſuch a Caſe as this, Demonſtration is neceſſary.

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

There ſhould have been Demonſtration of the contrary too, before it had been believ'd——

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

So I ſuppoſe there was.

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

How? Where? When?

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

That I can't tell; nay, I don't ſay there was—I am willing to believe as favorably of my Nephew as I can.

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

I don't know that. [*Half Aſide.*

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

How? Don't you believe that, ſay you, my Lord?

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

No, I don't ſay ſo —— I confeſs I am troubled to find you ſo cold in his Defence.

Lady

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

His Defence! Bleſs me, wou'd you have me defend an ill Thing?

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

You believe it then?

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

I don't know; I am very unwilling to ſpeak my Thoughts in any Thing that may be to my Couſin's Diſadvantage; beſides, I find, my Lord, you are prepared to receive an ill Impreſſion from any Opinion of mine which is not conſenting with your own: But ſince I am like to be ſuſpected in the End, and 'tis a Pain any longer to diſſemble, I own it to you; in ſhort I do believe it, nay, and can believe any Thing worſe, if it were laid to his Charge — Don't aſk me my Reaſons, my Lord, for they are not fit to be told you.

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

I'm amaz'd; here muſt be Something more than ordinary in this. [*Aſide.*] Not fit to be told me, Madam? You can have no Intereſts, wherein I am not concern'd, and conſequently the ſame Reaſons ought to be convincing to me, which create your Satisfaction or Diſquiet.

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

But thoſe which cauſe my Diſquiet, I

am willing to have remote from your Hearing. Good my Lord, don't preſs me.

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

Don't oblige me to preſs you.

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

Whatever it was, 'tis paſt: And that is better to be unknown which cannot be prevented; therefore let me beg you to reſt ſatisfied—

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

When you have told me, I will—

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

You won't.

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

By my Life, my Dear, I will.

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

What if you can't.

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

How? Then I muſt know, nay I will: No more trifling—I charge you tell me—By all our mutual Peace to come; upon your Duty——

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

Nay, my Lord, you need ſay no more, to make me lay my Heart before you; but don't be thus tranſported; compoſe yourſelf: It is not of Concern, to make you loſe one Minute's Temper. 'Tis not indeed,

deed, my Dear. Nay, by this Kiſs you ſhan't be angry. O Lord, I wiſh I had not told you any Thing. — Indeed, my Lord, you have frighted me. Nay, look pleas'd, I'll tell you.

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

Well, well.

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

Nay, but will you be calm—indeed it's Nothing but——

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

But what?

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

But will you promiſe me not to be angry — Nay you muſt — Not to be angry with *Mellefont*— I dare ſwear he's ſorry— and were it to do again, would not—

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

Sorry! for what? Death, you rack me with Delay.

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

Nay, no great Matter, only——Well I have your Promiſe,—Pho, why Nothing, only your Nephew had a Mind to amuſe himſelf ſometimes with a little Gallantry towards me. Nay, I can't think he meant any Thing ſeriouſly, but methought it look'd oddly.

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

Confuſion and Hell, what do I hear!

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

Or, may be, he thought he was not enough a-kin to me, upon your Account, and had a Mind to create a nearer Relation on his own; a Lover, you know, my Lord — Ha! ha! ha! Well, but that's all —Now you have it; well, remember your Promiſe, my Lord, and don't take any Notice of it to him.

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

No, no, no—Damnation!

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

Nay, I ſwear you muſt not——A little harmleſs Mirth — Only miſplac'd, that's all — But if it were more, 'tis over now, and all's well. For my Part I have forgot it; and ſo has he, I hope—for I have not heard any Thing from him theſe two Days.

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

Theſe two Days! Is it ſo freſh? Unnatural Villain! Death, I'll have him ſtripp'd and turn'd naked out of my Doors this Moment, and let him rot and periſh, inceſtuous Brute!

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

O for Heav'n's Sake, my Lord, you'll ruin

ruin me if you take ſuch public Notice of it, it will be a Town-talk: Conſider your own and my Honor—nay, I told you, you would not be ſatisfied when you knew it.

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

Before I've done, I will be ſatisfied. Ungrateful Monſter! how long?—

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

Lord, I don't know: I wiſh my Lips had grown together when I told you—Almoſt a Twelvemonth—Nay, I won't tell you any more, 'till you are yourſelf. Pray, my Lord, don't let the Company ſee you in this Diſorder — Yet, I confeſs, I can't blame you; for I think I was never ſo ſurpris'd in my Life — Who would have thought my Nephew could have ſo miſconſtrued my Kindneſs — But will you go into your Cloſet, and recover your Temper? I'll make an Excuſe of ſudden Buſineſs to the Company, and come to you. Pray, good dear my Lord, let me beg you do now: I'll come immediately, and tell you all. Will you, my Lord?

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

I will—I am mute with Wonder.

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

Well, but go now, here's ſome Body coming.

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

Well, I go—You won't ſtay, for I would hear more of this.

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

I follow inſtantly——So.

SCENE II.

Lady TOUCHWOOD, MASKWELL.

MASKWELL.

THIS was a Maſter-piece, and did not need my Help — tho' I ſtood ready for a Cue to come in and confirm all, had there been Occaſion.

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

Have you ſeen *Mellefont?*

MASKWELL.

I have; and am to meet him here about this Time.

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

How does he bear his Diſappointment?

MASKWELL.

Secure in my Aſſiſtance, he ſeem'd not much afflicted, but rather laugh'd at the ſhallow Artifice, which ſo little Time muſt of Neceſſity diſcover. Yet he is apprehenſive of ſome farther Deſign of yours, and has

has engaged me to watch you. I believe he will hardly be able to prevent your Plot, yet I would have you uſe Caution and Expedition.

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

Expedition indeed; for all we do, muſt be perform'd in the remaining Part of this Ev'ning, and before the Company break up; leſt my Lord ſhould cool, and have an Opportunity to talk with him privately—My Lord muſt not ſee him again.

MASKWELL.

By no Means; therefore you muſt aggravate my Lord's Diſpleaſure to a Degree that will admit of no Conference with him.——What think you of mentioning me?

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

How?

MASKWELL.

To my Lord, as having been privy to *Mellefont*'s Deſign upon you, but ſtill uſing my utmoſt Endeavours to diſſuade him: Tho' my Friendſhip and Love to him has made me conceal it; yet you may ſay, I threatened the next Time he attempted any Thing of that Kind, to diſcover it to my Lord.

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

To what End is this?

MASKWELL.

It will confirm my Lord's Opinion of my Honor and Honeſty, and create in him a new Confidence in me, which (ſhould this Deſign miſcarry) will be neceſſary to the forming another Plot that I have in my Head — To cheat you, as well as the reſt. [*Aſide.*

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

I'll do it—I'll tell him you hindered him once from forcing me.

MASKWELL.

Excellent! Your Ladyſhip has a moſt improving Fancy. You had beſt go to my Lord, keep him as long as you can in his Cloſet, and I doubt not but you will mould him to what you pleaſe; your Gueſts are ſo engaged in their own Follies and Intrigues, they'll miſs neither of you.

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

When ſhall we meet?——At Eight this Evening in my Chamber; there rejoice at our Succeſs, and toy away an Hour in Mirth.

MASKWELL.

I will not fail.

SCENE

SCENE III.

MASKWELL *alone.*

I Know what ſhe means by toying away an Hour, well enough. Pox, I have loſt all Appetite to her; yet ſhe's a fine Woman, and I lov'd her once. But I don't know, ſince I have been in a great Meaſure kept by her, the Caſe is alter'd; what was my Pleaſure is become my Duty: And I have as little Stomach to her now as if I were her Huſband. Should ſhe ſmoke my Deſign upon *Cynthia,* I were in a fine Pickle. She has a damn'd penetrating Head, and knows how to interpret a Coldneſs the right Way; therefore I muſt diſſemble Ardor and Ecſtaſy, that's reſolv'd: How eaſily and pleaſantly is that diſſembled before Fruition! Pox on't, that a Man can't drink without quenching his Thirſt. Ha! yonder comes *Mellefont* thoughtful. Let me think: Meet her at Eight—hum—ha! By Heav'n I have it—If I can ſpeak to my Lord before — Was it my Brain or Providence? No Matter which — I will deceive 'em all, and yet ſecure myſelf: 'Twas a lucky Thought! Well,

Well, this Double-Dealing is a Jewel.— Here he comes; now for me. ——

[Maſkwell *pretending not to ſee him, walks by him, and ſpeaks as it were to himſelf.*

SCENE IV.

[*To him*] MELLEFONT *muſing.*

MASKWELL.

MERCY on us, what will the Wickedneſs of this World come to?

MELLEFONT.

How now, *Jack?* What, ſo full of Contemplation that you run over?

MASKWELL.

I'm glad you're come, for I could not contain myſelf any longer: And was juſt going to give Vent to a Secret, which no Body but you ought to drink down. —— Your Aunt's juſt gone from hence.

MELLEFONT.

And having truſted thee with the Secrets of her Soul, thou art villanouſly bent to diſcover 'em all to me, ha?

MASKWELL.

I'm afraid my Frailty leans that Way — But I don't know whether I can in Honor diſcover 'em all.

MEL-

MELLEFONT.

All, all, Man: What, you may in Honor betray her as far as ſhe betrays herſelf. No tragical Deſign upon my Perſon, I hope.—

MASKWELL.

No, but it's a comical Deſign upon mine.

MELLEFONT.

What doſt thou mean?

MASKWELL.

Liſten and be dumb: We have been bargaining about the Rate of your Ruin —

MELLEFONT.

Like any two Guardians to an Orphan Heireſs — Well.

MASKWELL.

And whereas Pleaſure is generally paid with Miſchief, what Miſchief I do is to be paid with Pleaſure.

MELLEFONT.

So when you've ſwallow'd the Potion, you ſweeten your Mouth with a Plumb.

MASKWELL.

You are merry, Sir, but I ſhall probe your Conſtitution. In ſhort, the Price of your Baniſhment is to be paid with the Perſon of ——

MELLEFONT.

Of *Cynthia,* and her Fortune—Why you forget you told me this before.

MASK-

MASKWELL.

No, no — So far you are right; and I am, as an earneſt of that Bargain, to have full and free Poſſeſſion of the Perſon of— your Aunt.

MELLEFONT.

Ha!——Pho, you trifle.

MASKWELL.

By this Light, I'm ſerious; all Raillery apart — I knew 'twould ſtun you: This Evening at Eight ſhe will receive me in her Bed-Chamber.

MELLEFONT.

Hell and the Devil! is ſhe abandon'd of all Grace—Why the Woman is poſſeſs'd—

MASKWELL.

Well, will you go in my Stead?

MELLEFONT.

By Heav'n, into a hot Furnace ſooner.

MASKWELL.

No, you would not — It would not be ſo convenient, as I can order Matters.

MELLEFONT.

What d'ye mean?

MASKWELL.

Mean? Not to diſappoint the Lady, I aſſure you — Ha! ha! ha! how gravely he looks—Come, come, I won't perplex you. 'Tis the only Thing that Providence could have

have contriv'd to make me capable of ſerving you, either to my Inclination or your own Neceſſity.

MELLEFONT.

How, how, for Heaven's Sake, dear *Maſkwell?*

MASKWELL.

Why thus —— I'll go according to Appointment; you ſhall have Notice at the critical Minute to come and ſurpriſe your Aunt and me together: Counterfeit a Rage againſt me, and I'll make my Eſcape through the private Paſſage from her Chamber, which I'll take Care to leave open: 'Twill be hard, if then you can't bring her to any Conditions. For this Diſcovery will diſarm her of all Defence, and leave her entirely at your Mercy: Nay, ſhe muſt ever after be in Awe of you.

MELLEFONT.

Let me adore thee, my better Genius! By Heav'n, I think it is not in the Power of Fate to diſappoint my Hopes —— My Hopes! my Certainty.

MASKWELL.

Well, I'll meet you here, within a Quarter of Eight, and give you Notice.

MELLEFONT.

Good Fortune ever go along with thee.

SCENE

SCENE V.

MELLEFONT, CARELESS.

CARELESS.

MELLEFONT, get out o'th' Way, my Lady *Plyant*'s coming, and I ſhall never ſucceed while thou art in Sight ——Tho' ſhe begins to tack about; but I made Love a great While to no Purpoſe.

MELLEFONT.

Why, what's the Matter? She's convinced that I don't care for her.

CARELESS.

I can't get an Anſwer from her, that does not begin with her Honor, or her Virtue, her Religion, or ſome ſuch Cant. Then ſhe has told me the whole Hiſtory of Sir *Paul*'s nine Years Courtſhip; how he has lain for whole Nights together upon the Stairs, before her Chamber-Door; and that the firſt Favor he received from her, was a Piece of an old Scarlet Petticoat for a Stomacher; which ſince the Day of his Marriage, he has, out of a Piece of Gallantry, converted into a Night-Cap, and

and wears it ſtill with much Solemnity on his Anniverſary Wedding-Night.

MELLEFONT.

That I have ſeen, with the Ceremony thereunto belonging — For on that Night he creeps in at the Bed's Feet like a gull'd Baſſa that has marry'd a Relation of the Grand Signior, and that Night he has his Arms at Liberty. Did not ſhe tell you at what a Diſtance ſhe keeps him? He has confeſs'd to me, that but at ſome certain Times, that is I ſuppoſe when ſhe apprehends being with Child, he never has the Privilege of uſing the Familiarity of a Huſband with a Wife. He was once given to ſcrambling with his Hands and ſprawling in his Sleep; and ever ſince ſhe has him ſwaddled up in Blankets, and his Hands and Feet ſwath'd down, and ſo put to Bed; and there he lies with a great Beard, like a *Ruſſian* Bear upon a Drift of Snow. You are very great with him, I wonder he never told you his Grievances; he will, I warrant you.

CARELESS.

Exceſſively fooliſh!——But that which gives me moſt Hopes of her, is her telling me of the many Temptations ſhe has reſiſted.

MEL-

MELLEFONT.

Nay, then you have her; for a Woman's bragging to a Man that ſhe has overcome Temptations, is an Argument that they were weakly offer'd, and a Challenge to him to engage her more irreſiſtibly. 'Tis only an enhancing the Price of the Commodity, by telling you how many Cuſtomers have underbid her.

CARELESS.

Nay, I don't deſpair—But ſtill ſhe has a Grudging to you—I talk'd to her t'other Night at my Lord *Froth*'s Maſquerade, when I'm ſatisfied ſhe knew me, and I had no Reaſon to complain of my Reception; but I find Women are not the ſame bare-fac'd and in Maſks, —— and a Viſor diſguiſes their Inclinations as much as their Faces.

MELLEFONT.

'Tis a Miſtake, for Women may moſt properly be ſaid to be unmaſk'd when they wear Viſors; for that ſecures them from Bluſhing, and being out of Countenance; and next to being in the Dark, or alone, they are moſt truly themſelves in a Viſor Maſk. Here they come, I'll leave you. Ply her cloſe, and by and by clap a *Billet-doux* into her Hand: For a Woman never thinks

thinks a Man truly in Love with her, 'till he has been Fool enough to think of her out of her Sight, and to loſe ſo much Time as to write to her.

SCENE VI.

CARELESS, *Sir* PAUL PLYANT, *Lady* PLYANT.

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

SHAN'T we diſturb your Meditation, Mr. *Careleſs?* You wou'd be private?

CARELESS.

You bring that along with you, Sir *Paul,* that ſhall be always welcome to my Privacy.

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

O, ſweet Sir, you load your humble Servants, both me and my Wife, with continual Favors.

Lady PLYANT.

Sir *Paul,* what a Phraſe was there? You will be making Anſwers, and taking that upon you, which ought to lie upon me: That you ſhould have ſo little Breeding to think Mr. *Careleſs* did not apply himſelf to me. Pray what have you to entertain any Body's Privacy? I ſwear and declare in

the Face of the World, I'm ready to bluſh for your Ignorance.

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

I acquieſce, my Lady; but don't ſnub ſo loud. [*Aſide to her.*

Lady PLYANT.

Mr. *Careleſs,* if a Perſon that is wholly illiterate might be ſuppoſed to be capable of being qualified to make a ſuitable Return to thoſe Obligations which you are pleaſed to confer upon one that is wholly incapable of being qualified in all thoſe Circumſtances, I'm ſure I ſhou'd rather attempt it than any Thing in the World, [*Curtſies*] for I'm ſure there's Nothing in the World that I would rather. [*Curtſies*] But I know Mr. *Careleſs* is ſo great a Critic and ſo fine a Gentleman, that it is impoſſible for me ——

CARELESS.

O Heavens! Madam, you confound me.

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

Gads-bud, ſhe's a fine Perſon ——

Lady PLYANT.

O Lord! Sir, pardon me, we Women have not thoſe Advantages: I know my own Imperfections—But at the ſame Time you muſt give me Leave to declare in the Face

Face of the World, that no Body is more ſenſible of Favors and Things; for, with the Reſerve of my Honor, I aſſure you, Mr. *Careleſs,* I don't know any Thing in the World I would refuſe to a Perſon ſo meritorious — You'll Pardon my Want of Expreſſion. ——

CARELESS.

O your Ladyſhip is abounding in all Excellence, particularly that of Phraſe.

Lady PLYANT.

You are ſo obliging, Sir.

CARELESS.

Your Ladyſhip is ſo charming.

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

So, now, now; now, my Lady.

Lady PLYANT.

So well bred.

CARELESS.

So ſurpriſing.

Lady PLYANT.

So well dreſt, ſo *bonne mine,* ſo eloquent, ſo unaffected, ſo eaſy, ſo free, ſo particular, ſo agreeable——

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

Ay, ſo, ſo, there.

CARELESS.

O Lord, I beſeech you, Madam, don't—

Lady PLYANT.

So gay, ſo graceful, ſo good Teeth, ſo fine Shape, ſo fine Limbs, ſo fine Linen, and I don't doubt but you have a very good Skin, Sir.

CARELESS.

For Heav'n's Sake, Madam—I'm quite out of Countenance.

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

And my Lady's quite out of Breath; or elſe you ſhould hear—— Gads-bud, you may talk of my Lady *Froth!*

CARELESS.

O fy, fy, not to be named of a Day — My Lady *Froth* is very well in her Accompliſhments —— But it is when my Lady *Plyant* is not thought of—If that can ever be.

Lady PLYANT.

O you overcome me——That is ſo exceſſive.

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

Nay, I ſwear and vow that was pretty.

CARELESS.

O Sir *Paul,* you are the happieſt Man alive. Such a Lady! that is the Envy of her own Sex, and the Admiration of ours.

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

Your humble Servant. I am, I thank Heav'n,

Heav'n, in a fine Way of Living, as I may ſay, peacefully and happily, and I think need not envy any of my Neighbours, bleſſed be Providence——Ay, truly, Mr. *Careleſs,* my Lady is a great Bleſſing, a fine, diſcreet, well-ſpoken Woman as you ſhall ſee — if it becomes me to ſay ſo; and we live very comfortably together; ſhe is a little haſty ſometimes, and ſo am I; but mine's ſoon over, and then I'm ſo ſorry—O, Mr. *Careleſs,* if it were not for one Thing—

SCENE VII.

CARELESS, *Sir* PAUL PLYANT, *Lady* PLYANT, *Boy with a Letter.*

Lady PLYANT.

HOW often have you been told of that, you Jackanapes?

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

Gad ſo, Gads-bud——*Tim,* carry it to my Lady, you ſhould have carried it to my Lady firſt.

BOY.

'Tis directed to your Worſhip.

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

Well, well, my Lady reads all Letters

firſt——Child, do ſo no more; d'ye hear, *Tim.*

BOY.

No, and't pleaſe you.

SCENE VIII.

CARELESS, *Sir* PAUL PLYANT, *Lady* PLYANT.

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

A Humor of my Wife's; you know Women have little Fancies——But as I was telling you, Mr. *Careleſs,* if it were not for one Thing, I ſhould think myſelf the happieſt Man in the World; indeed that touches me near, very near.

CARELESS.

What can that be, Sir *Paul?*

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

Why, I have, I thank Heaven, a very plentiful Fortune, a good Eſtate in the Country, ſome Houſes in Town, and ſome Money, a pretty tolerable perſonal Eſtate; and it is a great Grief to me, indeed it is, Mr. *Careleſs,* that I have not a Son to inherit this—'Tis true, I have a Daughter, and a fine dutiful Child ſhe is, though I ſay

ſay it, bleſſed be Providence I may ſay; for indeed, Mr. *Careleſs,* I am mightily beholden to Providence——A poor unworthy Sinner—But if I had a Son, ah, that's my Affliction, and my only Affliction; indeed I cannot refrain Tears when it comes in my Mind. [*Cries.*

CARELESS.

Why, methinks that might be eaſily remedied——my Lady's a fine likely Woman.——

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

Oh, a fine likely Woman as you ſhall ſee in a Summer's Day—Indeed ſhe is, Mr. *Careleſs,* in all Reſpects.

CARELESS.

And I ſhould not have taken you to have been ſo old—

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

Alas, that's not it, Mr. *Careleſs;* ah! that's not it; no, no, you ſhoot wide of the Mark a Mile; indeed you do, that's not it, Mr. *Careleſs;* no, no, that's not it.

CARELESS.

No, what can be the Matter then?

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

You'll ſcarcely believe me, when I ſhall tell you — my Lady is ſo nice — It's very ſtrange, but it's true: Too true—ſhe's ſo

very nice, that I don't believe ſhe would touch a Man for the World—At leaſt not above once a Year; I'm ſure I have found it ſo; and alas, what's once a Year to an old Man, who would do Good in his Generation? Indeed it's true, Mr. *Careleſs*, it breaks my Heart—I am her Huſband, as I may ſay; though far unworthy of that Honor, yet I am her Huſband; but alas-a-day, I have no more Familiarity with her Perſon—as to that Matter—than with my own Mother—no indeed.

CARELESS.

Alas-a-day, this is a lamentable Story; my Lady muſt be told on't; ſhe muſt i'Faith, Sir *Paul;* 'tis an Injury to the World.

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

Ah! would to Heav'n you would, Mr. *Careleſs;* you are mightily in her Favor.

CARELESS.

I warrant you; what, we muſt have a Son ſome Way or other.

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

Indeed, I ſhould be mightily bound to you, if you could bring it about, Mr. *Careleſs.*

Lady PLYANT.

Here, Sir *Paul,* it's from your Steward, here's

here's a Return of ſix hundred Pounds; you may take fifty of it for the next half Year. [*Gives him the Letter.*

SCENE IX.

[*To them*] *Lord* FROTH, CYNTHIA.

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

HOW does my Girl? Come hither to thy Father, poor Lamb, thou'rt melancholic.

Lord FROTH.

Heav'n, Sir *Paul,* you amaze me, of all Things in the World —— You are never pleas'd but when we are all upon the broad Grin; all Laugh and no Company; ah, then 'tis ſuch a Sight to ſee ſome Teeth— Sure you're a great Admirer of my Lady *Whiſler,* Mr. *Sneer,* and Sir *Laurence Loud,* and that Gang.

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

I vow and ſwear ſhe's a very merry Woman, but, I think ſhe laughs a little too much.

Lord FROTH.

Merry! O Lord, what a Character that is of a Woman of Quality—You have been at

at my Lady *Whifler*'s upon her Day, Madam?

CYNTHIA.

Yes, my Lord—I muſt humor this Fool. [*Aſide.*

Lord FROTH.

Well and how? hee! What is your Senſe of the Converſation?

CYNTHIA.

O moſt ridiculous, a perpetual Concert of Laughing without any Harmony; for ſure, my Lord, to laugh out of Time, is as diſagreeable as to ſing out of Time or out of Tune.

Lord FROTH.

Hee! hee! hee! right; and then, my Lady *Whifler* is ſo ready —— ſhe always comes in three Bars too ſoon—And then, what do they laugh at? For you know laughing without a Jeſt is as impertinent, hee! as, as—

CYNTHIA.

As dancing without a Fiddle.

Lord FROTH.

Juſt, i'Faith; that was at my Tongue's End.

CYNTHIA.

But that cannot be properly ſaid of them, for I think they are all in good Nature

ture with the World, and only laugh at one another; and you muſt allow they have all Jeſts in their Perſons, though they have none in their Converſation.

Lord FROTH.

True, as I'm a Perſon of Honor — For Heav'n's Sake let us ſacrifice 'em to Mirth a little. [*Enter Boy and whiſpers Sir* Paul.

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

Gads ſo — Wife, Wife, my Lady *Plyant*, I have a Word.

Lady PLYANT.

I'm buſy, Sir *Paul;* I wonder at your Impertinence —

CARELESS.

Sir *Paul*, harkye, I'm reaſoning the Matter you know; Madam, — if your Ladyſhip pleaſe, we'll diſcourſe of this in the next Room.

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

O ho, I wiſh you good Succeſs, I wiſh you good Succeſs. Boy, tell my Lady, when ſhe has done, I would ſpeak with her below.

SCENE

SCENE X.

CYNTHIA, *Lord* FROTH, *Lady* FROTH, BRISK.

Lady FROTH.

THEN you think that *Epiſode* between *Suſan*, the Dairy-Maid, and our Coachman, is not amiſs; you know, I may ſuppoſe the Dairy in Town, as well as in the Country.

BRISK.

Incomparable, let me periſh—But then being an Heroic Poem, had not you better call him a *Charioteer? Charioteer* founds great; beſides your Ladyſhip's Coachman having a red Face, and your comparing him to the Sun —— And you know the Sun is call'd *Heav'n's Charioteer*.

Lady FROTH.

Oh, infinitely better; I'm extremely beholden to you for the Hint; ſtay, we'll read over thoſe half a Score Lines again. [*Pulls out a Paper.*] Let me ſee here, you know what goes before—the Compariſon, you know.

For

For as the Sun ſhines ev'ry Day, [Reads.]
So, of our Coachman I may ſay.

BRISK.

I'm afraid that Simile won't do in wet Weather—Becauſe you ſay the Sun ſhines ev'ry Day.

Lady FROTH.

No, for the Sun it won't, but it will do for the Coachman, for you know there's moſt Occaſion for a Coach in wet Weather.

BRISK.

Right, right, that ſaves all.

Lady FROTH.

Then I don't ſay the Sun ſhines all the Day, but that he peeps now and then; yet he does ſhine all the Day too, you know, tho' we don't ſee him.

BRISK.

Right, but the Vulgar will never comprehend that.

Lady FROTH.

Well, you ſhall hear—Let me ſee.

For as the Sun ſhines ev'ry Day, [Reads.]
So, of our Coachman I may ſay,
He ſhows his drunken fiery Face,
Juſt as the Sun does, more or leſs.

BRISK.

BRISK.

That's right, all's well, all's well. *More or leſs.*

Lady FROTH. [Reads.]

And when at Night his Labor's done,
Then too, like Heav'n's Charioteer the Sun:

Ay, *Charioteer* does better.

Into the Dairy he deſcends
And there his Whipping and his Driving ends;
There he's ſecure from Danger of a Bilk,
His Fare is paid him, and he ſets in Milk.

For *Suſan*, you know, is *Thetis*, and ſo—

BRISK.

Incomparably well and proper, i'Gad—But I have one Exception to make—— Don't you think *Bilk* (I know its good Rhyme) but don't you think *Bilk* and *Fare* too like a Hackney Coachman?

Lady FROTH.

I ſwear and vow I'm afraid ſo — And yet our *Jehu* was a Hackney Coachman, when my Lord took him.

BRISK.

Was he? I'm anſwer'd, if *Jehu* was a Hackney Coachman — You may put that in

in the marginal Notes tho', to prevent Criticiſm —— Only mark it with a ſmall Aſteriſm, and ſay,— *Jehu* was formerly a Hackney Coachman.

Lady FROTH.

I will; you'd oblige me extremely to write Notes to the whole Poem.

BRISK.

With all my Heart and Soul, and proud of the vaſt Honor, let me periſh.

Lord FROTH.

Hee! hee! hee! my Dear, have you done—won't you join with us? We were laughing at my Lady *Whifler,* and Mr. *Sneer*.

Lady FROTH.

—— Ay, my Dear — Were you? Oh filthy Mr. *Sneer;* he's a nauſeous Figure, a moſt fulſamic Fop, foh — He ſpent two Days together in going about *Covent-Garden* to ſuit the Lining of his Coach with his Complexion.

Lord FROTH.

O ſilly! yet his Aunt is as fond of him, as if ſhe had brought the Ape into the World herſelf.

BRISK.

Who, my Lady *Toothleſs?* O, ſhe's a morti-

mortifying Spectacle; ſhe's always chewing the Cud like an old *Jew*.

CYNTHIA.

Fy, Mr. *Briſk*, *Eringo*'s for her Cough.

Lady FROTH.

I have ſeen her take 'em half chew'd out of her Mouth, to laugh, and then put 'em in again—Foh.

Lord FROTH.

Foh.

Lady FROTH.

Then ſhe's always ready to laugh when *Sneer* offers to ſpeak — And ſits in Expectation of his no Jeſt, with her Gums bare, and her Mouth open——

BRISK.

Like an Oyſter at low Ebb, i'Gad—— Ha! ha! ha!

CYNTHIA. [*Aſide.*]

Well, I find there are no Fools ſo inconſiderable in themſelves, but they can render other People contemptible by expoſing their Infirmities.

Lady FROTH.

Then that t'other great ſtrapping Lady ——I can't hit of her Name; the old fat Fool that paints ſo exorbitantly.

BRISK.

I know whom you mean — But Deuce take

take me I can't hit of her Name neither—Paints, d'ye ſay? Why ſhe lays it on with a Trowel——Then ſhe has a great Beard that briſtles through it, and makes her look as if ſhe were plaiſter'd with Lime and Hair, let me periſh.

Lady FROTH.

Oh you made a Song upon her, Mr. *Briſk.*

BRISK.

He? egad, ſo I did—— My Lord can ſing it.

CYNTHIA.

O good my Lord let's hear it.

BRISK.

'Tis not a Song neither— It's a Sort of an Epigram, or rather an Epigrammatic Sonnet; I don't know what to call it, but it's Satire.—Sing it, my Lord.

Lord FROTH *ſings.*

Ancient Phillis *has young Graces,*
'Tis a ſtrange Thing, but a true one;
Shall I tell you how?
She herſelf makes her own Faces,
And each Morning wears a new one;
Where's the Wonder now?

BRISK.

Short, but there's Salt in't; my Way of Writing, i'Gad.

SCENE XI.

[*To them*] FOOTMAN.

Lady FROTH.

HOW now?

FOOTMAN.

Your Ladyſhip's Chair is come.

Lady FROTH.

Is Nurſe and the Child in it?

FOOTMAN.

Yes, Madam.

Lady FROTH.

O the dear Creature! Let's go ſee it.

Lord FROTH.

I ſwear, my Dear, you'll ſpoil that Child, with ſending it to and again ſo often; this is the ſeventh Time the Chair has gone for her to Day.

Lord FROTH.

O law, I ſwear it's but the ſixth—and I han't ſeen her theſe two Hours—The poor dear Creature—I ſwear, my Lord, you don't love poor little *Sapho*—Come, my

my dear *Cynthia,* Mr. *Briſk,* we'll go ſee *Sapho,* tho' my Lord won't.

CYNTHIA.

I'll wait upon your Ladyſhip.

BRISK.

Pray, Madam, how old is Lady *Sapho?*

Lady FROTH.

Three Quarters; but I ſwear ſhe has a World of Wit, and can ſing a Tune already. My Lord, won't you go? Won't you? What, not to ſee *Saph?* Pray, my Lord, come ſee little *Saph.* I knew you cou'd not ſtay.

SCENE XII.

CYNTHIA *alone.*

'TIS not ſo hard to counterfeit Joy in the Depth of Affliction, as to diſſemble Mirth in the Company of Fools—Why ſhould I call 'em Fools? The World thinks better of 'em; for theſe have Quality and Education, Wit and fine Converſation, are receiv'd and admir'd by the World——If not, they like and admire themſelves——And why is not that true Wiſdom, for 'tis Happineſs: And for aught

I know, we have misapply'd the Name all this While, and mistaken the Thing: Since

If Happiness in Self-content is plac'd,
The Wise are Wretched, and Fools only Bless'd.

End of the Third Act.

ACT

ACT IV. SCENE I.

MELLEFONT, CYNTHIA.

CYNTHIA.

I Heard him loud as I came by the Cloſet-Door, and my Lady with him, but ſhe ſeem'd to moderate his Paſſion.

MELLEFONT.

Ay, Hell thank her, as gentle Breezes moderate a Fire; but I ſhall counter-work her Spells, and ride the Witch in her own Bridle.

CYNTHIA.

It's impoſſible; ſhe'll caſt beyond you ſtill — I'll lay my Life it will never be a Match.

MELLEFONT.

What?

CYNTHIA.

Between you and me.

MELLEFONT.

Why ſo?

CYNTHIA.

My Mind gives me it won't — becauſe we are both willing; we each of us ſtrive

to reach the Goal, and hinder one another in the Race; I ſwear it never does well when the Parties are ſo agreed—For when People walk Hand in Hand, there's neither overtaking nor meeting: We hunt in Couples, where we both purſue the ſame Game, but forget one another; and 'tis becauſe we are ſo near that we don't think of coming together.

MELLEFONT.

Hum, 'Gad I believe there's Something in't; —— Marriage is the Game that we hunt, and while we think that we only have it in View, I don't ſee but we have it in our Power.

CYNTHIA.

Within Reach; for Example, give me your Hand; you have look'd through the wrong End of the Perſpective all this While; for Nothing has been between us but our Fears.

MELLEFONT.

I don't know why we ſhould not ſteal out of the Houſe this very Moment and marry one another, without Conſideration or the Fear of Repentance. Pox o'Fortune, Portion, Settlements and Jointures.

CYNTHIA.

CYNTHIA.

Ay, ay, what have we to do with 'em; you know we marry for Love.

MELLEFONT.

Love, Love, downright very villanous Love.

CYNTHIA.

And he that can't live upon Love, deſerves to die in a Ditch.——Here then, I give you my Promiſe, in ſpite of Duty, any Temptation of Wealth, your Inconſtancy, or my own Inclination to change—

MELLEFONT.

To run moſt wilfully and unreaſonably away with me this Moment, and be married.

CYNTHIA.

Hold—Never to marry any Body elſe.

MELLEFONT.

That's but a Kind of Negative Conſent —Why, you won't balk the Frolic?

CYNTHIA.

If you had not been ſo aſſured of your own Conduct, I would not—But 'tis but reaſonable, that ſince I conſent to like a Man without the vile Conſideration of Money, he ſhould give me a very evident Demonſtration of his Wit: Therefore let me ſee you undermine my Lady *Touch-*

wood, as you boaſted, and force her to give her Conſent, and then—

MELLEFONT.

I'll do't.

CYNTHIA.

And I'll do't.

MELLEFONT.

This very next enſuing Hour of Eight o'Clock, is the laſt Minute of her Reign, unleſs the Devil aſſiſt her *in propria Perſona.*

CYNTHIA.

Well, if the Devil ſhould aſſiſt her, and your Plot miſcarry——

MELLEFONT.

Ay, what am I to truſt to then?

CYNTHIA.

Why if you give me very clear Demonſtration that it was the Devil, I'll allow for irreſiſtible Odds. But if I find it to be only Chance, or Deſtiny, or unlucky Stars, or any Thing but the very Devil, I'm inexorable: Only ſtill I'll keep my Word, and live a Maid for your Sake.

MELLEFONT.

And you won't die one, for your own; ſo ſtill there's Hope.

CYNTHIA.

Here's my Mother in Law, and your Friend *Careleſs,* I would not have 'em ſee us together yet.

SCENE

SCENE II.

CARELESS, *Lady* PLYANT.

Lady PLYANT.

I Swear, Mr. *Careleſs,* you are very alluring—And ſay ſo many fine Things, and Nothing is ſo moving to me as a fine Thing. Well, I muſt do you this Juſtice, and declare in the Face of the World, never any Body gain'd ſo far upon me as yourſelf; with Bluſhes I muſt own it, you have ſhaken, as I may ſay, the very Foundation of my Honor——Well, ſure if I eſcape your Importunities, I ſhall value myſelf as long as I live, I ſwear.

CARELESS.

And deſpiſe me. [*Sighing.*

Lady PLYANT.

The laſt of any Man in the World, by my Purity; now you make me ſwear—O Gratitude forbid, that I ſhould ever be wanting in a reſpectful Acknowledgment of an entire Reſignation of all my beſt Wiſhes, for the Perſon and Parts of ſo accompliſh'd a Perſon, whoſe Merit challenges much more, I'm ſure, than my illiterate Praiſes can deſcription—

CARELESS.

CARELESS. [*In a whining Tone.*]

Ah Heav'ns, Madam, you ruin me with Kindneſs; your charming Tongue purſues the Victory of your Eyes, while at your Feet your poor Adorer dies.

Lady PLYANT.

Ah! very fine.

CARELESS. [*Still whining.*]

Ah why are you ſo Fair, ſo bewitching Fair? O let me grow to the Ground here, and feaſt upon that Hand; O let me preſs it to my Heart, my trembling Heart, the nimble Movement ſhall inſtruct your Pulſe, and teach it to alarm Deſire.

[*Zoons I'm almoſt at the End of my Cant, if ſhe does not yield quickly.* [*Aſide.*

Lady PLYANT.

O that's ſo paſſionate and fine, I cannot hear it——I am not ſafe if I ſtay, and muſt leave you.

CARELESS.

And muſt you leave me! Rather let me languiſh out a wretched Life, and breathe my Soul beneath your Feet.

[*I muſt ſay the ſame Thing over again, and can't help it.* [*Aſide.*

Lady PLYANT.

I ſwear I'm ready to languiſh too —— O my Honor! Whither is it going? I proteſt

teſt you have given me the Palpitation of the Heart.

CARELESS.

Can you be ſo cruel?——

Lady PLYANT.

O riſe I beſeech you, ſay no more 'till you riſe — Why did you kneel ſo long? I ſwear I was ſo tranſported, I did not ſee it.— Well, to ſhow you how far you have gain'd upon me; I aſſure you if Sir *Paul* ſhould die, of all Mankind there's none I'd ſooner make my ſecond Choice.

CARELESS.

O Heav'n! I can't outlive this Night without your Favor —— I feel my Spirits faint, a general Dampneſs overſpreads my Face, a cold deadly Dew already vents through all my Pores, and will to Morrow waſh me for ever from your Sight, and drown me in my Tomb.

Lady PLYANT.

O you have conquered, ſweet, melting, moving Sir, you have conquered — What Heart of Marble can refrain to weep, and yield to ſuch ſad Sayings—— [*Cries.*

CARELESS.

I thank Heaven, they are the ſaddeſt that I ever ſaid —— Oh!

[*I ſhall never contain Laughter.* [*Aſide.*

Lady

Lady PLYANT.

Oh, I yield myſelf all up to your uncontrolable Embraces —— Say, thou dear dying Man, when, where, and how?—— Ah! there's Sir *Paul.*

CARELESS.

'Slife, yonder's Sir *Paul;* but if he were not come, I'm ſo tranſported I cannot ſpeak —— This Note will inform you.

[*Gives her a Note.*

SCENE III.

Lady PLYANT, *Sir* PAUL PLYANT, CYNTHIA.

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

THOU art my tender Lambkin, and ſhalt do what thou wilt——But endeavour to forget this *Melleſont.*

CYNTHIA.

I would obey you to my Power, Sir; but if I have not him, I have ſworn never to marry.

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

Never to marry! Heav'ns forbid; muſt I neither have Sons nor Grandſons? muſt the Family of the *Plyants* be utterly extinct for

for want of Iſſue Male? Oh Impiety! But did you ſwear, did that ſweet Creature ſwear, ha? How durſt you ſwear without my Conſent, ha? Gads-bud, who am I?

CYNTHIA.

Pray don't be angry, Sir: When I ſwore, I had your Conſent; and therefore I ſwore.

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

Why then the revoking my Conſent does annul, or make of none Effect, your Oath: So you may unſwear it again—— The Law will allow it.

CYNTHIA.

Ay, but my Conſcience never will.

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

Gads-bud no Matter for that, Conſcience and Law never go together; you muſt not expect that.

Lady PLYANT.

Ay, but Sir *Paul,* I conceive if ſhe has ſworn, d'ye mark me, if ſhe has once ſworn; it is moſt unchriſtian, inhuman, and obſcene that ſhe ſhould break it.—I'll make up the Match again, becauſe Mr. *Careleſs* ſaid it would oblige him. [*Aſide.*

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

Does your Ladyſhip conceive ſo—Why I was of that Opinion once too—Nay if your

your Ladyſhip conceives ſo, I'm of that Opinion again; but I can neither find my Lord nor my Lady to know what they intend.

Lady PLYANT.

I'm ſatisfied that my Couſin *Melleſont* has been much wronged.

CYNTHIA.

I'm amazed to find her of our Side, for I'm ſure ſhe lov'd him. [*Aſide.*

Lady PLYANT.

I know my Lady *Touchwood* has no Kindneſs for him; and beſides I have been informed by Mr. *Careleſs,* that *Melleſont* had never any Thing more than a profound Reſpect — That he has own'd himſelf to be my Admirer, 'tis true, but he was never ſo preſumptuous to entertain any diſhonorable Notion of Things; ſo that if this be made plain—I don't ſee how my Daughter can in Conſcience, or Honor, or any Thing in the World—

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

Indeed if this be made plain, as my Lady your Mother ſays, Child—

Lady PLYANT.

Plain! I was inform'd of it by Mr. *Careleſs* — And I aſſure you Mr. *Careleſs* is a

a Perſon — that has a moſt extraordinary Reſpect and Honor for you, Sir *Paul.*

CYNTHIA. [*Aſide.*]

And for your Ladyſhip too, I believe, or elſe you had not chang'd Sides ſo ſoon; now I begin to find it.

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

I am much obliged to Mr. *Careleſs* really, he is a Perſon that I have a great Value for, not only for that, but becauſe he has a great Veneration for your Ladyſhip.

Lady PLYANT.

O las, no indeed, Sir *Paul,* 'tis upon your Account.

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

No, I proteſt and vow, I have no Title to his Eſteem, but in having the Honor to appertain in ſome Meaſure to your Ladyſhip, that's all.

Lady PLYANT.

O law now, I ſwear and declare, it ſhan't be ſo, you're too modeſt, Sir *Paul.*

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

It becomes me, when there is any Compariſon made between—

Lady PLYANT.

O fy, fy, Sir *Paul,* you'll put me out of Countenance — Your very obedient and affectionate Wife; that's all—And highly honor'd in that Title. *Sir*

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

Gads-bud I am tranſported! Give me Leave to kiſs your Ladyſhip's Hand.

CYNTHIA.

That my poor Father ſhould be ſo very ſilly! [*Aſide.*

Lady PLYANT.

My Lip indeed, Sir *Paul,* I ſwear you ſhall. [*He kiſſes her, and bows very low.*

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

I humbly thank your Ladyſhip——I don't know whether I fly on Ground, or walk in Air——Gads-bud, ſhe was never thus before—Well, I muſt own myſelf the moſt beholden to Mr. *Careleſs*——As ſure as can be this is all his doing,——Something that he has ſaid; well, 'tis a rare Thing to have an ingenious Friend. Well, your Ladyſhip is of Opinion that the Match may go forward?

Lady PLYANT.

By all Means—Mr. *Careleſs* has ſatisfied me of the Matter.

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

Well, why then Lamb you may keep your Oath, but have a Care of making raſh Vows; come hither to me, and kiſs *Papa.*

Lady

Lady PLYANT.

I ſwear and declare, I am in ſuch a Twitter to read Mr. *Careleſs*'s Letter, that I can't forbear any longer—But though I may read all Letters firſt by Prerogative, yet I'll be ſure to be unſuſpected this Time.—Sir *Paul.*

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

Did your Ladyſhip call?

Lady PLYANT.

Nay, not to interrupt you my Dear—Only lend me your Letter, which you had from your Steward to Day: I would look upon the Account again; and may be increaſe your Allowance.

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

There it is, Madam: Do you want a Pen and Ink? [*Bows and gives the Letter.*

Lady PLYANT.

No, no, Nothing elſe, I thank you, Sir *Paul.*—So, now I can read my own Letter under the Cover of his. [*Aſide.*

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

He? And wilt thou bring a Grandſon at nine Months End.—He? A brave chopping Boy. — I'll ſettle a thouſand Pound a Year upon the Rogue as ſoon as ever he looks me in the Face; I will, Gads-bud. I'm overjoy'd to think I have any of my

Family that will bring Children into the World. For I would fain have ſome Reſemblance of myſelf in my Poſterity, he, *Thy?* Can't you contrive that Affair, Girl? Do, Gads-bud, think on thy old Father; he? Make the young Rogue as like as you can.

CYNTHIA.

I'm glad to ſee you ſo merry, Sir.

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

Merry! Gads-bud I'm ſerious, I'll give thee five hundred Pound for every Inch of him that reſembles me; ah this Eye, this left Eye! A thouſand Pound for this left Eye. This has done Execution in its Time, Girl; why thou haſt my Leer, Huſſey, juſt thy Father's Leer. —— Let it be tranſmitted to the young Rogue by the Help of Imagination; why 'tis the Mark of our Family, *Thy;* our Houſe is diſtinguiſh'd by a languiſhing Eye, as the Houſe of *Auſtria* is by a thick Lip. — Ah! when I was of your Age, Huſſey, I would have held fifty to one, I could have drawn my own Picture—Gads-bud I could have done —not ſo much as you neither, — but — nay, don't bluſh——

CYNTHIA.

I don't bluſh, Sir, for I vow I don't underſtand— *Sir*

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

Pſhaw, Pſhaw, you fib, you Baggage, you do underſtand, and you ſhall underſtand; come don't be ſo nice, Gads-bud don't learn after your Mother in Law my Lady here: Marry, Heav'n forbid that you ſhould follow her Example, that would ſpoil all indeed. Bleſs us, if you ſhould take a Vagary and make a raſh Reſolution on your Wedding Night, to die a Maid, as ſhe did; all were ruin'd, all my Hopes loſt —— My Heart would break, and my Eſtate would be left to the wide World, he? I hope you are a better Chriſtian than to think of living a Nun; he? Anſwer me.

CYNTHIA.

I'm all Obedience, Sir, to your Commands.

Lady PLYANT. [*Having read the Letter.*] O dear Mr. *Careleſs,* I ſwear he writes charmingly, and he looks charmingly, and he has charm'd me, as much as I have charm'd him; and ſo I'll tell him in the Wardrobe when 'tis dark. O Crimine! I hope Sir *Paul* has not ſeen both Letters.

[*Puts the wrong Letter haſtily up, and gives him her own.*

Sir *Paul,* here's your Letter, to Morrow Morning I'll ſettle Accounts to your Advantage.

SCENE IV.

[*To them*] BRISK.

BRISK.

SIR *Paul,* Gads-bud you're an uncivil Perſon, let me tell you, and all that; and I did not think it had been in you.

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

O law, what's the Matter now? I hope you are not angry, Mr. *Briſk.*

BRISK.

Deuce take me, I believe you intend to marry your Daughter yourſelf; you're always brooding over her like an old Hen, as if ſhe were not well hatch'd, i'Gad, he?

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

Good, ſtrange! Mr. *Briſk* is ſuch a merry facetious Perſon, he! he! he! No, no, I have done with her, I have done with her now.

BRISK.

The Fiddlers have ſtay'd this Hour in the Hall, and my Lord *Froth* wants a Partner;

Partner; we can never begin without her.

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

Go, go Child, go, get you gone and dance and be merry, I'll come and look at you by and by. —— Where's my Son *Mellefont?*

Lady PLYANT.

I'll ſend him to them, I know where he is—

BRISK.

Sir *Paul,* will you ſend *Careleſs* into the Hall if you meet him?

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

I will, I will, I'll go and look for him on Purpoſe.

SCENE V.

BRISK *alone.*

SO, now they are all gone, and I have an Opportunity to practiſe. —— Ah! My dear Lady *Froth!* She's a moſt engaging Creature, if ſhe were not ſo fond of that damn'd coxcombly Lord of hers; and yet I am forced to allow him Wit too, to keep in with him——No Matter, ſhe's

a Woman of Parts, and i'Gad Parts will carry her. She ſaid ſhe would follow me into the Gallery — Now to make my Approaches — Hem! hem! Ah Ma- [*Bows.*] dam! — Pox on't, why ſhould I diſparage my Parts by thinking what to ſay? None but dull Rogues *think;* witty Men, like rich Fellows, are always ready for all Expences; while your Blockheads, like poor needy Scoundrels, are forced to examine their Stock, and forecaſt the Charges of the Day. Here ſhe comes; I'll ſeem not to ſee her, and try to win her with a new airy Invention of my own, hem!

SCENE VI.

[*To him*] *Lady* FROTH.

BRISK *ſings, walking about.*

I'M ſick with Love, ha! ha! ha! *prithee come cure me.*

I'm ſick with, &c.

O ye Pow'rs! O my Lady *Froth!* my Lady *Froth!* My Lady *Froth!* Heigh-ho! Break, my Heart; Gods I thank you.

[*Stands muſing with his Arms acroſs.*

Lady

Lady FROTH.

O Heav'ns, Mr. *Briſk!* What's the Matter?

BRISK.

My Lady *Froth!* Your Ladyſhip's moſt humble Servant; — The Matter, Madam? Nothing, Madam, Nothing at all i'Gad. I was fallen into the moſt agreeable Amuſement in the whole Province of Contemplation: That's all—(I'll ſeem to conceal my Paſſion, and that will look like Reſpect.) [*Aſide.*

Lady FROTH.

Bleſs me, why did you call out upon me ſo loud?—

BRISK.

O Lord, I Madam! I beſeech your Ladyſhip—when?

Lady FROTH.

Juſt now as I came in; bleſs me, why don't you know it?

BRISK.

Not I, let me periſh —— But did I? Strange! I confeſs your Ladyſhip was in my Thoughts; and I was in a Sort of Dream that did in a Manner repreſent a very pleaſing Object to my Imagination; but—but did I indeed?—To ſee how Love

and Murder will out. But did I really name my Lady *Froth?*

Lady FROTH.

Three Times aloud, as I love Letters— But did you talk of Love? O *Parnaſſus!* Who would have thought Mr. *Briſk* could have been in Love, ha! ha! ha! O Heavens, I thought you cou'd have no Miſtreſs but the Nine Muſes.

BRISK.

No more I have i'Gad, for I adore 'em all in your Ladyſhip — Let me periſh, I don't know whether to be ſplenetic, or airy upon't; the Deuce take me if I can tell whether I am glad or ſorry that your Ladyſhip has made the Diſcovery.

Lady FROTH.

O be merry by all Means— Prince *Volſcius* in Love! Ha! ha! ha!

BRISK.

O barbarous, to turn me into Ridicule! Yet, ha! ha! ha! The Deuce take me, I can't help laughing myſelf, ha! ha! ha! yet by Heav'ns I have a violent Paſſion for your Ladyſhip, ſeriouſly.

Lady FROTH.

Seriouſly? Ha! ha! ha!

BRISK.

Seriouſly. Ha! ha! ha! Gad I have, for all I laugh.

Lady

Lady FROTH.

Ha! ha! ha! What d'ye think I laugh at? Ha! ha! ha!

BRISK.

Me, i'Gad, ha! ha!

Lady FROTH.

No, the Deuce take me if I don't laugh at myſelf; for hang me if I have not a violent Paſſion for Mr. *Briſk,* ha! ha! ha!

BRISK.

Seriouſly?

Lady FROTH.

Seriouſly. Ha! ha! ha!

BRISK.

That's well enough; let me periſh, ha! ha! ha! O miraculous, what a happy Diſcovery! Ah my dear charming Lady *Froth!*

Lady FROTH.

O my adored Mr. *Briſk!* [*Embrace.*

SCENE VII.

[*To them*] *Lord* FROTH.

Lord FROTH.

THE Company are all ready — How now!

BRISK. [*Softly to her.*]

Zoons, Madam, there's my Lord.

Lady

Lady FROTH.

Take no Notice — but obſerve me — Now caſt off and meet me at the lower End of the Room, and then join Hands again; I could teach my Lord this Dance purely, but I vow, Mr. *Briſk,* I can't tell how to come ſo near any other Man. Oh here's my Lord, now you ſhall ſee me do it with him.

[*They pretend to practiſe part of a Country Dance.*

Lord FROTH.

——Oh, I ſee there's no Harm yet—— But I don't like this Familiarity. [*Aſide.*

Lady FROTH.

—Shall you and I do our cloſe Dance, to ſhow Mr. *Briſk?*

Lord FROTH.

No, my Dear, do it with him.

Lady FROTH.

I'll do it with him, my Lord, when you are out of the Way.

BRISK.

That's good i'Gad, that's good, Deuce take me, I can hardly help laughing in his Face. [*Aſide.*

Lord FROTH.

Any other Time, my Dear, or we'll dance it below.

Lady

Lady FROTH.

With all my Heart.

BRISK.

Come my Lord, I'll wait on you —— My charming, witty Angel! [*To her.*

Lady FROTH.

We ſhall have whiſpering Time enough, you know, ſince we are Partners.

SCENE VIII.

Lady PLYANT, CARELESS.

Lady PLYANT.

O Mr. *Careleſs,* Mr. *Careleſs,* I'm ruin'd, I'm undone!

CARELESS.

What's the Matter, Madam?

Lady PLYANT.

O the unluckieſt Accident! I'm afraid I ſhan't live to tell it you.

CARELESS.

Heav'n forbid! What is it?

Lady PLYANT.

I'm in ſuch a Fright; the ſtrangeſt Quandary and Premunire! I'm all over in a univerſal Agitation, I dare ſwear every Circumſtance of me trembles. —O your Letter,

Letter, your Letter! By an unfortunate Miſtake, I have given Sir *Paul* your Letter inſtead of his own.

CARELESS.

That was unlucky.

Lady PLYANT.

O yonder he comes reading of it; for Heav'n's Sake ſtep in here and adviſe me quickly, before he ſees.

SCENE IX.

Sir PAUL *with the Letter.*

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

O Providence, what a Conſpiracy have I diſcover'd —— But let me ſee to make an End on't. —— [*Reads*] Hum, — *After Supper in the Wardrobe by the Gallery. If Sir* Paul *ſhould ſurpriſe us, I have a Commiſſion from him to treat with you about the very Matter of Fact* —— Matter of Fact! Very pretty; it ſeems then I am conducing to my own Cuckoldom; why this is the very traiterous Poſition of taking up Arms by my Authority, againſt my Perſon! Well, let me ſee—*'Till then I languiſh in Expectation of my adored Charmer.*

Dying Ned Careleſs.

Gads-

Gads-bud, would that were Matter of Fact too. Die and be damn'd for a *Judas Maccabeus,* and *Iſcariot* both. O Friendſhip! What art thou but a Name! Henceforward let no Man make a Friend that would not be a Cuckold: For whomſoever he receives into his Boſom, will find the Way to his Bed, and there return his Careſſes with Intereſt to his Wife. Have I for this been pinion'd Night after Night for three Years paſt? Have I been ſwath'd in Blankets 'till I have been even depriv'd of Motion? Have I approach'd the Marriage Bed with Reverence as to a ſacred Shrine, and denied myſelf the Enjoyment of lawful Domeſtic Pleaſures to preſerve its Purity, and muſt I now find it polluted by foreign Iniquity? O my Lady *Plyant,* you were chaſte as Ice, but you are melted now, and falſe as Water. —But Providence has been conſtant to me in diſcovering this Conſpiracy; ſtill I am beholden to Providence; if it were not for Providence, ſure poor Sir *Paul* thy Heart would break.

SCENE

SCENE X.

[*To him*] *Lady* PLYANT.

Lady PLYANT.

SO, Sir, I ſee you have read the Letter,—Well now, Sir *Paul*, what do you think of your Friend *Careleſs?* Has he been treacherous, or did you give his Inſolence a Licenſe to make Trial of your Wife's ſuſpected Virtue? D'ye ſee here?

[*Snatches the Letter as in Anger.*

Look, read it: Gad's my Life, if I thought it were ſo, I would this Moment renounce all Communication with you. Ungrateful Monſter! He? Is it ſo? Ay, I ſee it, a Plot upon my Honor; your guilty Cheeks confeſs it: Oh where ſhall wrong'd Virtue fly for Reparation! I'll be divorced this Inſtant.

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

Gads-bud what ſhall I ſay? This is the ſtrangeſt Surpriſe! why I don't know any Thing at all, nor I don't know whether there be any Thing at all in the World, or no.

Lady

Lady PLYANT.

I thought I ſhould try you, falſe Man. I that never diſſembled in my Life: Yet to make Trial of you, pretended to like that Monſter of Iniquity, *Careleſs*, and found out that Contrivance to let you ſee this Letter; which now I find was of your own inditing —— I do Heathen, I do; ſee my Face no more; I'll be divorced preſently.

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

O ſtrange, what will become of me! — I'm ſo amaz'd, and ſo overjoy'd, ſo afraid, and ſo ſorry — But did you give me this Letter on Purpoſe, he? Did you?

Lady PLYANT.

Did I? Do you doubt me, *Turk, Saracen?* I have a Couſin that's a Proctor in the Commons, I'll go to him inſtantly. —

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

Hold, ſtay, I beſeech your Ladyſhip — I'm ſo overjoy'd, ſtay, I'll confeſs all.

Lady PLYANT.

What will you confeſs, *Jew?*

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

Why now as I hope to be ſaved, I had no Hand in this Letter—Nay, hear me, I beſeech your Ladyſhip: The Devil take me now if he did not go beyond my Commiſſion — If I deſired him to do any Thing more than

than ſpeak a good Word only juſt for me; Gads-bud only for poor Sir *Paul,* I'm an Anabaptiſt, or a *Jew,* or what you pleaſe to call me.

Lady PLYANT.

Why is not here Matter of Fact?

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

Ay, but by your own Virtue and Continency that Matter of Fact is all his own doing. — I confeſs I had a great Deſire to have ſome Honors conferr'd upon me, which lie all in your Ladyſhip's Breaſt, and he being a well-ſpoken Man, I deſired him to intercede for me. ——

Lady PLYANT.

Did you ſo, Preſumption! Oh! he comes, the *Tarquin* comes; I cannot bear his Sight.

SCENE XI.

CARELESS, *Sir* PAUL PLYANT.

CARELESS.

SIR *Paul,* I'm glad I've met with you; 'Gad I have ſaid all I could, but can't prevail — Then my Friendſhip to you has carried me a little farther in this Matter—

Sir

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

Indeed — Well Sir — I'll diſſemble with him a little. [*Aſide.*

CARELESS.

Why Faith I have in my Time known honeſt Gentlemen abuſed by a pretended Coyneſs in their Wives, and I had a Mind to try my Lady's Virtue —— And when I could not prevail for you, 'Gad I pretended to be in Love myſelf —— but all in vain, ſhe would not hear a Word upon that Subject: Then I writ a Letter to her; I don't know what Effects that will have, but I'll be ſure to tell you when I do, tho' by this Light I believe her Virtue is impregnable.

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

O Providence! Providence! What Diſcoveries are here made? Why, this is better and more miraculous than the reſt.

CARELESS.

What do you mean?

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

I can't tell you, I'm ſo overjoy'd; come along with me to my Lady, I can't contain myſelf; come my dear Friend.

CARELESS.

So, ſo, ſo, this Difficulty's over. [*Aſide.*

SCENE XII.

MELLEFONT, MASKWELL, *from different Doors.*

MELLEFONT.

MASKWELL! I have been looking for you — 'tis within a Quarter of Eight.

MASKWELL.

My Lady is juſt gone into my Lord's Cloſet, you had beſt ſteal into her Chamber before ſhe comes, and lie concealed there, otherwiſe ſhe may lock the Door when we are together, and you not eaſily get in to ſurpriſe us.

MELLEFONT.

He? You ſay true.

MASKWELL.

You had beſt make Haſte, for after ſhe has made ſome Apology to the Company for her own and my Lord's Abſence all this While, ſhe'll retire to her Chamber inſtantly.

MELLEFONT.

I go this Moment: Now Fortune I defy thee.

SCENE

SCENE XIII.

MASKWELL *alone.*

I Confeſs you may be allow'd to be ſecure in your own Opinion; the Appearance is very fair, but I have an After-Game to play that ſhall turn the Tables, and here comes the Man that I muſt manage.

SCENE XIV.

[*To him*] *Lord* TOUCHWOOD.

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

MASKWELL, you are the Man I wiſh'd to meet.

MASKWELL.

I am happy to be in the Way of your Lordſhip's Commands.

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

I have always found you prudent and careful in any Thing that has concern'd me or my Family.

MASKWELL.

I were a Villain elſe——I am bound by Duty and Gratitude, and my own Inclination, to be ever your Lordſhip's Servant.

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

Enough—You are my Friend; I know it: Yet there has been a Thing in your Knowledge, which has concern'd me nearly, that you have conceal'd from me.

MASKWELL.

My Lord!

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

Nay, I excuſe your Friendſhip to my unnatural Nephew thus far—But I know you have been privy to his impious Deſigns upon my Wife. This Ev'ning ſhe has told me all: Her Good-nature conceal'd it as long as was poſſible; but he perſeveres ſo in Villany, that ſhe has told me even you were weary of diſſuading him, though you have once actually hindered him from forcing her.

MASKWELL.

I am ſorry, my Lord, I can't make you an Anſwer; this is an Occaſion in which I would willingly be ſilent.

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

I know you would excuſe him—And I know as well that you can't.

MASK-

MASKWELL.

Indeed I was in Hopes t'had been a youthful Heat that might have ſoon boil'd over; but ——

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

Say on.

MASKWELL.

I have Nothing more to ſay, my Lord— But to expreſs my Concern; for I think his phrenſy increaſes daily.

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

How! Give me but Proof of it, ocular Proof, that I may juſtify my Dealing with him to the World, and ſhare my Fortunes.

MASKWELL.

O my Lord! conſider, that is hard: Beſides, Time may work upon him: Then, for me to do it! I have profeſs'd an everlaſting Friendſhip to him.

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

He is your Friend, and what am I?

MASKWELL.

I am anſwer'd.

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

Fear not his Diſpleaſure; I will put you out of his, and Fortune's Power; and for that thou art ſcrupulouſly honeſt, I will ſecure thy Fidelity to him, and give my Honor never to own any Diſcovery that

you ſhall make me. Can you give me a demonſtrative Proof? Speak.

MASKWELL.

I wiſh I could not——To be plain, my Lord, I intended this Ev'ning to have try'd all Arguments to diſſuade him from a Deſign, which I ſuſpect; and if I had not ſucceeded, to have informed your Lordſhip of what I knew.

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

I thank you. What is the Villain's Purpoſe?

MASKWELL.

He has own'd Nothing to me of late, and what I mean now, is only a bare Suſpicion of my own. If your Lordſhip will meet me a Quarter of an Hour hence, there, in that Lobby by my Lady's Bed-Chamber, I ſhall be able to tell you more.

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

I will.

MASKWELL.

My Duty to your Lordſhip, makes me do a ſevere Piece of Juſtice.—

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

I will be ſecret, and reward your Honeſty beyond your Hopes.

SCENE

SCENE XV.

SCENE *opening ſhows Lady* TOUCHWOOD's *Chamber.*

MELLEFONT *ſolus.*

PRAY Heav'n my Aunt keep Touch with her Aſſignation. — Oh that her Lord were but ſweating behind this Hanging, with the Expectation of what I ſhall ſee—Hiſt, ſhe comes—Little does ſhe think what a Mine is juſt ready to ſpring under her Feet. But to my Poſt.

[*Goes behind the Hangings.*

SCENE XVI.

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

'TIS Eight o'Clock: Methinks I ſhould have found him here. Who does not prevent the Hour of Love, outſtays the Time; for to be duily punctual, is too ſlow.—I was accuſing you of Neglect.

SCENE XVII.

Lady TOUCHWOOD, MASKWELL.

MELLEFONT *abſconding.*

MASKWELL.

I Confeſs you do reproach me when I ſee you here before me; but 'tis fit I ſhould be ſtill behind-hand, ſtill to be more and more indebted to your Goodneſs.

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

You can excuſe a Fault too well, not to have been to blame —— A ready Anſwer ſhows you were prepar'd.

MASKWELL.

Guilt is ever at a Loſs, and Confuſion waits upon it; when Innocence and bold Truth are always ready for Expreſſion —

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

Not in Love; Words are the weak Support of cold Indifference; Love has no Language to be heard.

MASKWELL.

Exceſs of Joy has made me ſtupid. Thus may my Lips be ever clos'd. [*Kiſſes her.* And thus——Oh who would not loſe his Speech,

Speech, upon Condition to have Joys above it?

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

Hold, let me lock the Door firſt.

[*Goes to the Door.*

MASKWELL.

That I believ'd; 'twas well I left the private Paſſage open. [*Aſide.*

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

So, that's ſafe.

MASKWELL.

And ſo may all your Pleaſures be, and ſecret as this Kiſs——

MELLEFONT.

And may all Treachery be thus diſcover'd. [*Leaps out.*

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

Ah! [*Shrieks.*

MELLEFONT.

Villain! [*Offers to draw.*

MASKWELL.

Nay then, there's but one Way.

[*Runs out.*

SCENE

SCENE XVIII.

Lady TOUCHWOOD, MELLEFONT.

MELLEFONT.

SAY you ſo, were you provided for an Eſcape? Hold, Madam, you have no more Holes to your Burrow, I'll ſtand between you and this Sally-Port.

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

Thunder ſtrike thee dead for this Deceit, immediate Lightning blaſt thee, me, and the whole World—Oh! I could rack myſelf, play the Vulture to my own Heart, and gnaw it piecemeal, for not boding to me this Misfortune.

MELLEFONT.

Be patient.——

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

Be damn'd.

MELLEFONT.

Conſider I have you on the Hook; you will but flounder yourſelf a weary, and be nevertheleſs my Priſoner.

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

I'll hold my Breath and die, but I'll be free.

MELLE-

MELLEFONT.

O Madam, have a Care of dying unprepar'd; I doubt you have ſome unrepented Sins that may hang heavy, and retard your Flight.

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

O! what ſhall I do? ſay? Whither ſhall I turn? Has Hell no Remedy?

MELLEFONT.

None, Hell has ſerv'd you ev'n as Heaven has done, left you to yourſelf.——You're in a Kind of *Eraſmus* Paradiſe; yet if you pleaſe you may make it a Purgatory; and with a little Penance and my Abſolution all this may turn to good Account.

Lady TOUCHWOOD. [*Aſide.*]

Hold in, my Paſſion, and fall, fall a little, thou ſwelling Heart; let me have ſome Intermiſſion of this Rage, and one Minute's Coolneſs to diſſemble. [*She weeps.*

MELLEFONT.

You have been to blame.—I like thoſe Tears, and hope they are of the pureſt Kind——Penitential Tears.

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

O the Scene was ſhifted quick before me—I had not Time to think—I was ſurpriſed to ſee a Monſter in the Glaſs, and now

now I find 'tis myſelf: Can you have Mercy to forgive the Faults I have imagin'd, but never put in Practice—O conſider, conſider how fatal you have been to me, you have already kill'd the Quiet of this Life. The Love of you, was the firſt wand'ring Fire that e'er miſled my Steps, and while I had only that in View, I was betray'd into unthought-of Ways of Ruin.

MELLEFONT.

May I believe this true?

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

O be not cruelly incredulous——How can you doubt theſe ſtreaming Eyes? Keep the ſevereſt Eye o'er all my future Conduct; and if I once relapſe, let me not hope Forgiveneſs; 'twill ever be in your Power to ruin me—My Lord ſhall ſign to your Deſires; I will myſelf create your Happineſs, and *Cynthia* ſhall be this Night your Bride—Do but conceal my Failings, and forgive.

MELLEFONT.

Upon ſuch Terms I will be ever yours in ev'ry honeſt Way.

SCENE

SCENE XIX.

MASKWELL *softly introduces Lord* TOUCHWOOD, *and retires.*

MASKWELL.

I Have kept my Word, he's here, but I muſt not be ſeen.

SCENE XX.

Lady TOUCHWOOD, *Lord* TOUCHWOOD, MELLEFONT.

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

HELL and Amazement! ſhe's in Tears.

Lady TOUCHWOOD. [*Kneeling.*]

Eternal Bleſſings thank you — Ha! My Lord liſt'ning! O Fortune has o'erpaid me all, all! all's my own! [*Aſide.*

MELLEFONT.

Nay, I beſeech you riſe.

Lady TOUCHWOOD. [*Aloud.*]

Never, never! I'll grow to the Ground, be buried quick beneath it, ere I'll be conſenting to ſo damn'd a Sin as Inceſt! unnatural Inceſt!

MELLEFONT.

Ha!

Lady

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

O cruel Man, will you not let me go—I'll forgive all that's paſt—O Heav'n, you will not raviſh me!

MELLEFONT.

Damnation!

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

Monſter, Dog! your Life ſhall anſwer this——

[*Draws and runs at* Mellefont, *is held by* *Lady* Touchwood.

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

O Heav'ns, my Lord! Hold, hold, for Heav'n's Sake.

MELLEFONT.

Confuſion! my Uncle! O the damn'd Sorcereſs.

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

Moderate your Rage, good my Lord! He's mad, alas he's mad—Indeed he is, my Lord, and knows not what he does—See how wild he looks.

MELLEFONT.

By Heav'n 'twere ſenſeleſs not to be mad, and ſee ſuch Witchcraft.

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

My Lord, you hear him, he talks idly.

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

Hence from my Sight, thou living Infamy

famy to my Name; when next I ſee that Face, I'll write Villain in't with my Sword's Point.

MELLEFONT.

Now, by my Soul, I will not go 'till I have made known my Wrongs—Nay, 'till I have made known yours, which, if poſſible, are greater — though ſhe has all the Hoſt of Hell her Servants.

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

Alas, he raves! Talks very Poetry! For Heav'n's Sake away my Lord, he'll either tempt you to Extravagance, or commit ſome himſelf.

MELLEFONT.

Death and Furies! will you not hear me? —— Why by Heav'n ſhe laughs, grins, points to your Back; ſhe forks out Cuckoldom with her Fingers, and you're running Horn-mad after your Fortune.

[*As ſhe is going ſhe turns back and ſmiles at him.*

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

I fear he's mad indeed—Let's ſend *Maſkwell* to him.

MELLEFONT.

Send him to her.

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

Come, come, good my Lord, my Heart aches ſo, I ſhall faint if I ſtay.

SCENE

SCENE XXI.

MELLEFONT *alone.*

O I could curſe my Stars, Fate, and Chance; all Cauſes and Accidents of Fortune in this Life! But to what Purpoſe? Yet, 'Sdeath, for a Man to have the Fruit of all his Induſtry grow full and ripe, ready to drop into his Mouth, and juſt when he holds out his Hand to gather it, to have a ſudden Whirlwind come, tear up Tree and all, and bear away the very Root and Foundation of his Hopes; What Temper can contain? They talk of ſending *Maſkwell* to me; I never had more Need of him— But what can he do? Imagination cannot form a fairer and more plauſible Deſign than this of his which has miſcarried—O my precious Aunt! I ſhall never thrive without I deal with the Devil, or another Woman.

Women like Flames have a deſtroying Pow'r,
Ne'er to be quench'd, 'till they themſelves devour.

SCENE *ſhuts.*

ACT

ACT V. SCENE I.

Lady TOUCHWOOD, MASKWELL.

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

WAS'T not lucky?

MASKWELL.

Lucky! Fortune is your own, and 'tis her Intereſt ſo to be; by Heav'n I believe you can control her Pow'r, and ſhe fears it; though Chance brought my Lord, 'twas your own Art that turn'd it to Advantage.

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

'Tis true, it might have been my Ruin —But yonder's my Lord, I believe he's coming to find you, I'll not be ſeen.

SCENE II.

MASKWELL *alone.*

SO; I durſt not own my introducing my Lord, though it ſucceeded well for her; for ſhe would have ſuſpected a De-

ſign which I ſhould have been puzzled to excuſe. My Lord is thoughtful — I'll be ſo too; yet he ſhall know my Thoughts; or think he does—

SCENE III.

[*To him*] *Lord* TOUCHWOOD.

MASKWELL.

WHAT have I done?

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

Talking to himſelf!

MASKWELL.

'Twas honeſt—and ſhall I be rewarded for it? No, 'twas honeſt, therefore I ſhan't; —Nay, rather therefore I ought not; for it rewards itſelf.

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

Unequall'd Virtue! [*Aſide.*

MASKWELL.

But ſhould it be known! then I have loſt a Friend! He was an ill Man, and I have gain'd; for half myſelf I lent him, and that I have recall'd; ſo I have ſerved myſelf, and what is yet better, I have ſerved a worthy Lord to whom I owe myſelf.

Lord

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

Excellent Man! [*Aſide.*

MASKWELL.

Yet I am wretched — O there is a Secret burns within this Breaſt, which ſhould it once blaze forth, would ruin all, conſume my honeſt Character, and brand me with the Name of Villain.

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

Ha!

MASKWELL.

Why do I love? Yet Heav'n and my waking Conſcience are my Witneſſes, I never gave one working Thought a Vent, which might diſcover that I lov'd, nor ever muſt; no, let it prey upon my Heart; for I would rather die, than ſeem once, barely ſeem, diſhoneſt:—O, ſhould it once be known I love fair *Cynthia,* all this that I have done would look like Rival's Malice, falſe Friendſhip to my Lord, and baſe Self-intereſt. Let me periſh firſt, and from this Hour avoid all Sight and Speech, and, if I can, all Thought of that pernicious Beauty. Ha! But what is my Diſtraction doing? I am wildly talking to myſelf, and ſome ill Chance might have directed malicious Ears this Way.

[*Seems to ſtart, ſeeing my Lord.*

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

Start not—let guilty and diſhoneſt Souls ſtart at the Revelation of their Thoughts, but be thou fix'd, as is thy Virtue.

MASKWELL.

I am confounded, and beg your Lordſhip's Pardon for thoſe free Diſcourſes which I have had with myſelf.

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

Come, I beg your Pardon that I overheard you, and yet it ſhall not need—— Honeſt *Maſkwell!* thy and my good Genius led me hither — Mine, in that I have diſcover'd ſo much manly Virtue; thine, in that thou ſhalt have due Reward of all thy Worth. Give me thy Hand—my Nephew is the alone remaining Branch of all our ancient Family; him I thus blow away, and conſtitute thee in his Room to be my Heir.—

MASKWELL.

Now Heav'n forbid—

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

No more—I have reſolv'd—The Writings are ready drawn, and wanted Nothing but to be ſign'd, and have his Name inſerted—Yours will fill the Blank as well —I will have no Reply——Let me command this Time; for 'tis the laſt, in which

I will aſſume Authority——hereafter, you ſhall rule where I have Power.

MASKWELL.

I humbly would Petition—

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

Is't for yourſelf?— [Maſkwell *pauſes.*] I'll hear of nought for any Body elſe.

MASKWELL.

Then Witneſs Heav'n for me, this Wealth and Honor was not of my ſeeking, nor would I build my Fortune on another's Ruin: I had but one Deſire—

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

Thou ſhalt enjoy it— If all I'm worth in Wealth or Intereſt can purchaſe *Cynthia,* ſhe is thine.—I'm ſure Sir *Paul*'s Conſent will follow Fortune; I'll quickly ſhow him which Way that is going.

MASKWELL.

You oppreſs me with Bounty; my Gratitude is weak, and ſhrinks beneath the Weight, and cannot riſe to thank you— What, enjoy my Love! Forgive the Tranſports of a Bleſſing ſo unexpected, ſo unhop'd for, ſo unthought of!

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

I will confirm it, and rejoice with thee.

SCENE IV.

MASKWELL *alone.*

THIS is proſp'rous indeed—Why let him find me out a Villain, ſettled in Poſſeſſion of a fair Eſtate, and full Fruition of my Love, I'll bear the Railings of a loſing Gameſter — But ſhou'd he find me out before! 'tis dangerous to delay—Let me think — ſhou'd my Lord proceed to treat openly of my Marriage with *Cynthia,* all muſt be diſcover'd, and *Mellefont* can be no longer blinded.—It muſt not be; nay, ſhou'd my Lady know it— ay, then were fine Work indeed! Her Fury wou'd ſpare Nothing, tho' ſhe involv'd herſelf in Ruin. No, it muſt be by Stratagem— I muſt deceive *Mellefont* once more, and get my Lord to conſent to my private Management. He comes opportunely—Now will I, in my old Way, diſcover the whole and real Truth of the Matter to him, that he may not ſuſpect one Word on't.

No Maſk like open Truth to cover Lies,
As to go naked is the beſt Diſguiſe.

SCENE

SCENE V.

[*To him*] MELLEFONT.

MELLEFONT.

O *Maſkwell,* what Hopes? I am confounded in a Maze of Thoughts, each leading into one another, and all ending in Perplexity. My Uncle will not ſee, nor hear me.

MASKWELL.

No Matter, Sir, don't trouble your Head, all's in my Power.

MELLEFONT.

How, for Heav'n's Sake?

MASKWELL.

Little do you think that your Aunt has kept her Word, —— How the Devil ſhe wrought my Lord into this Dotage, I know not; but he's gone to Sir *Paul* about my Marriage with *Cynthia,* and has appointed me his Heir.

MELLEFONT.

The Devil he has! What's to be done?

MASKWELL.

I have it, it muſt be by Stratagem; for it's in vain to make Application to him.

I think I have that in my Head that cannot fail. Where's *Cynthia?*

MELLEFONT.

In the Garden.

MASKWELL.

Let us go and consult her; my Life for yours, I cheat my Lord.

SCENE VI.

Lord TOUCHWOOD, *Lady* TOUCHWOOD.

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

MASKWELL your Heir, and marry *Cynthia?*

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

I cannot do too much, for so much Merit.

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

But this is a Thing of too great Moment to be so suddenly resolv'd. Why *Cynthia?* Why must he be marry'd? Is there not Reward enough in raising his low Fortune, but he must mix his Blood with mine, and wed my Niece? How know you that my Brother will consent, or she? Nay, he himself perhaps may have Affections otherwhere.

Lord

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

No, I am convinc'd he loves her.

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

Maſkwell love *Cynthia!* Impoſſible.

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

I tell you, he confeſs'd it to me.

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

Confuſion! How's this? [*Aſide.*

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

His Humility long ſtifled his Paſſion: And his Love of *Mellefont* would have made him ſtill conceal it. — But by Encouragement, I wrung the Secret from him; and know he's no Way to be rewarded but in her. I'll defer my farther Proceedings in it, 'till you have conſider'd it; but remember how we are both indebted to him.

SCENE VII.

Lady TOUCHWOOD *alone.*

BOTH indebted to him! Yes, we are both indebted to him, if you knew all, Villain! Oh, I am wild with this Surpriſe of Treachery: It is impoſſible, it cannot be.—He love *Cynthia!* What, have

I been Bawd to his Deſigns, his Property only, a baiting Place! Now I ſee what made him falſe to *Mellefont,* — Shame and Diſtraction! I cannot bear it, oh! what Woman can bear to be a Property? To be kindled to a Flame, only to light him to another's Arms; oh! that I were a Fire indeed, that I might burn the vile Traitor. What ſhall I do? How ſhall I think? I cannot think,——All my Deſigns are loſt, my Love unfated, my Revenge unfiniſhed, and freſh Cauſe of Fury from unthought-of Plagues.

SCENE VIII.

[*To her*] *Sir* PAUL PLYANT.

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

MADAM, Siſter, my Lady Siſter, did you ſee my Lady my Wife?

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

Oh! Torture!

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

Gads-bud, I can't find her high nor low; where can ſhe be, think you?

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

Where ſhe's ſerving you, as all your Sex

Sex ought to be ſerv'd; making you a Beaſt. Don't you know that you're a Fool, Brother?

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

A Fool; he! he! he! you're merry—— No, no, not I, I know no ſuch Matter.

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

Why then you don't know half your Happineſs.

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

That's a Jeſt with all my Heart, Faith and Troth, — But hark ye, my Lord told me Something of a Revolution of Things; I don't know what to make on't, — Gads-bud I muſt conſult my Wife, — he talks of diſinheriting his Nephew; and I don't know what, —— Look you, Siſter, I muſt know what my Girl has to truſt to; or not a Syllable of a Wedding, Gads-bud— to ſhow you that I am not a Fool.

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

Hear me: Conſent to the breaking off this Marriage, and the promoting any other, without conſulting me, and I'll renounce all Blood, all Relation and Concern with you for ever, —nay, I'll be your Enemy, and purſue you to Deſtruction, I'll tear your Eyes out, and tread you under my Feet. ——

Sir

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

Why, what's the Matter now? Good Lord, what's all this for? Pooh, here's a Joke indeed—Why, where's my Wife?

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

With *Careleſs,* in the cloſe Arbor; he may want you by this Time, as much as you want her.

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

O, if ſhe be with Mr. *Careleſs,* 'tis well enough.

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

Fool, Sot, inſenſible Ox! But remember what I ſaid to you, or you had better eat your own Horns, by this Light you had.

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

You're a paſſionate Woman, Gads-bud,—But to ſay Truth, all our Family are Choleric; I am the only peaceable Perſon amongſt 'em.

SCENE IX.

MELLEFONT, MASKWELL, CYNTHIA.

MELLEFONT.

I Know no other Way but this he has propos'd; if you have Love enough to run the Venture. CYN-

CYNTHIA.

I don't know whether I have Love enough, —— but I find I have Obſtinacy enough to purſue whatever I have once reſolv'd; and a true Female Courage to oppoſe any Thing that reſiſts my Will, tho' 'twere Reaſon itſelf.

MASKWELL.

That's right,—Well, I'll ſecure the Writings, and run the Hazard along with you.

CYNTHIA.

But how can the Coach and ſix Horſes be got ready without Suſpicion?

MASKWELL.

Leave it to my Care; that ſhall be ſo far from being ſuſpected, that it ſhall be got ready by my Lord's own Order.

MELLEFONT.

How?

MASKWELL.

Why, I intend to tell my Lord the whole Matter of our Contrivance, that's my Way.

MELLEFONT.

I don't underſtand you.

MASKWELL.

Why, I'll tell my Lord, I laid this Plot with you, on purpoſe to betray you; and that which put me upon it, was, the finding

it

it impoſſible to gain the Lady any other Way, but in the Hopes of her marrying you.—

MELLEFONT.

So ——

MASKWELL.

So; why ſo, while you're buſied in making yourſelf ready, I'll wheedle her into the Coach; and inſtead of you, borrow my Lord's Chaplain, and ſo run away with her myſelf.

MELLEFONT.

O I conceive you, you'll tell him ſo?

MASKWELL.

Tell him ſo! ay; why you don't think I mean to do ſo?

MELLEFONT.

No, no; ha! ha! I dare ſwear thou wilt not.

MASKWELL.

Therefore for our farther Security, I would have you diſguis'd like a Parſon, that if my Lord ſhould have Curioſity to peep, he may not diſcover you in the Coach, but think the Cheat is carried on as he would have it.

MELLEFONT.

Excellent *Maſkwell!* thou wert certainly meant for a Stateſman or a Jeſuit, — but thou art too honeſt for one, and too pious for the other. MASK-

MASKWELL.

Well, get yourſelves ready, and meet me in half an Hour, yonder in my Lady's Dreſſing-Room; go by the back Stairs, and ſo we may ſlip down without being obſerv'd. — I'll ſend the Chaplain to you with his Robes; I have made him my own, —— and ordered him to meet us to Morrow Morning at St. *Albans;* there we will ſum up this Account, to all our Satisfactions.

MELLEFONT.

Should I begin to thank or praiſe thee, I ſhould waſte the little Time we have.

SCENE X.

CYNTHIA, MASKWELL.

MASKWELL.

MADAM, you will be ready?

CYNTHIA.

I will be punctual to the Minute.

[*Going.*

MASKWELL.

Stay, I have a Doubt——Upon ſecond Thoughts, we had better meet in the Chaplain's Chamber here, the corner Chamber at

at this End of the Gallery; there is a back Way into it, ſo that you need not come through this Door—and a Pair of private Stairs leading down to the Stables —— It will be more convenient.

CYNTHIA.

I am guided by you,—but *Mellefont* will miſtake.

MASKWELL.

No, no, I'll after him immediately, and tell him.

CYNTHIA.

I will not fail.

SCENE XI.

MASKWELL *alone.*

WHY, *qui vult decipi decipiatur.* —— 'Tis no Fault of mine. I have told 'em in plain Terms, how eaſy 'tis for me to cheat 'em; and if they will not hear the Serpent's Hiſs, they muſt be ſtung into Experience, and future Caution. — Now to prepare my Lord to conſent to this.— But firſt I muſt inſtruct my little Levite; there is no Plot, public or private, that can expect to proſper without one of them has

has a Finger in't. He promiſed me to be within at this Hour. — Mr. *Saygrace*, Mr. *Saygrace*.

[*Goes to the Chamber Door, and knocks.*

SCENE XII.

MASKWELL, SAYGRACE.

SAYGRACE. [*Looking out.*]

SWEET Sir, I will but pen the laſt Line of an Acroſtic, and be with you in the twinkling of an Ejaculation, in the pronouncing of an *Amen*, or before you can ——

MASKWELL.

Nay, good Mr. *Saygrace*, do not prolong the Time, by deſcribing to me the Shortneſs of your Stay; rather, if you pleaſe, defer the finiſhing of your Wit, and let us talk about our Buſineſs, it ſhall be Tithes in your Way.

SAYGRACE. [*Enters.*]

You ſhall prevail, I would break off in the Middle of a Sermon to do you a Pleaſure.

MASKWELL.

You could not do me a greater, —— ex-

cept — the Buſineſs in Hand — Have you provided a Habit for *Melleſont?*

SAYGRACE.

I have; they are ready in my Chamber, together with a clean ſtarch'd Band and Cuffs.

MASKWELL.

Good; let them be carried to him, —— have you ſtitch'd the Gown Sleeve, that he may be puzzled, and waſte Time in putting it on?

SAYGRACE.

I have; the Gown will not be indued without Perplexity.

MASKWELL.

Meet me in half an Hour, here in your own Chamber. When *Cynthia* comes, let there be no Light, and do not ſpeak, that ſhe may not diſtinguiſh you from *Melleſont.* I'll urge Haſte, to excuſe your Silence.

SAYGRACE.

You have no more Commands?

MASKWELL.

None, your Text is ſhort.

SAYGRACE.

But pithy, and I will handle it with Diſcretion.

MASKWELL.

It will be the firſt you have ſo ſerved.

SCENE

SCENE XIII.

Lord TOUCHWOOD, MASKWELL.

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

SURE I was born to be controled by thoſe I ſhould command: My very Slaves will ſhortly give me Rules how I ſhall govern them.

MASKWELL.

I am concerned to ſee your Lordſhip diſcompoſed.——

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

Have you ſeen my Wife lately, or diſoblig'd her.

MASKWELL.

No, my Lord. What can this mean! [*Aſide.*

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

Then *Mellefont* has urged ſome Body to incenſe her — Something ſhe has heard of you which carries her beyond the Bounds of Patience.

MASKWELL.

This I fear'd. [*Aſide.*] Did not your Lordſhip tell her of the Honors you deſigned me?

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

Yes.

MASKWELL.

'Tis that; you know my Lady has a high Spirit, ſhe thinks I am unworthy.

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

Unworthy! 'Tis an ignorant Pride in her to think ſo——Honeſty to me is true Nobility. However, 'tis my Will it ſhall be ſo, and that ſhould be convincing to her as much as Reaſon—By Heaven, I'll not be Wife-ridden; were it poſſible, it ſhould be done this Night.

MASKWELL.

By Heaven he meets my Wiſhes. [*Aſide.*] Few Things are impoſſible to willing Minds.

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

Inſtruct me how this may be done, you ſhall ſee I want no Inclination.

MASKWELL.

I had laid a ſmall Deſign for to Morrow (as Love will be inventing) which I thought to communicate to your Lordſhip—But it may be as well done to Night.

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

Here's Company—Come this Way, and tell me.

SCENE

SCENE XIV.

CARELESS, CYNTHIA.

CARELESS.

IS not that he, now gone out with my Lord?

CYNTHIA.

Yes.

CARELESS.

By Heaven there's Treachery —— The Confuſion that I ſaw your Father in, my Lady *Touchwood*'s Paſſion, with what imperfectly I overheard between my Lord and her, confirm me in my Fears. Where's *Mellefont?*

CYNTHIA.

Here he comes.

SCENE XV.

[*To them*] MELLEFONT.

CYNTHIA.

DID *Maſkwell* tell you any Thing of the Chaplain's Chamber?

MELLEFONT.

No; my Dear, will you get ready—— the Things are all in my Chamber; I want Nothing but the Habit.

CARELESS.

You are betrayed, and *Maſkwell* is the Villain I always thought him.

CYNTHIA.

When you were gone, he ſaid his Mind was changed, and bid me meet him in the Chaplain's Room, pretending immediately to follow you, and give you Notice.

MELLEFONT.

How!

CARELESS.

There's *Saygrace* tripping by with a Bundle under his Arm—— He cannot be ignorant that *Maſkwell* means to uſe his Chamber; let's follow and examine him.

MELLEFONT.

'Tis Loſs of Time—I cannot think him falſe.

SCENE

SCENE XVI.

CYNTHIA, *Lord* TOUCHWOOD.

CYNTHIA.

MY Lord muſing!

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

He has a quick Invention, if this were ſuddenly deſigned——Yet he ſays he had prepared my Chaplain already.

CYNTHIA.

How's this! Now I fear indeed.

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

Cynthia here! Alone, fair Couſin, and melancholy?

CYNTHIA.

Your Lordſhip was thoughtful.

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

My Thoughts were on ſerious Buſineſs, not worth your hearing.

CYNTHIA.

Mine were on Treachery concerning you, and may be worth your hearing.

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

Treachery concerning me! pray be plain —Hark! What Noiſe?

MASKWELL. [*Within.*]
Will you not hear me?

Lady TOUCHWOOD. [*Within.*]
No, Monſter! Traitor! No.

CYNTHIA.

My Lady and *Maſkwell!* this may be lucky——My Lord, let me entreat you to ſtand behind this Skreen, and liſten; perhaps this Chance may give you Proof of what you ne'er could have believ'd from my Suſpicions.

SCENE XVII.

Lady TOUCHWOOD *with a Dagger,* MASKWELL: CYNTHIA *and Lord* TOUCHWOOD *abſcond, liſt'ning.*

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

YOU want but Leiſure to invent freſh Falſehood, and ſooth me to a fond Belief of all your Fictions; but I will ſtab the Lie that's forming in your Heart, and ſave a Sin, in Pity to your Soul.

MASKWELL.

Strike then—Since you will have it ſo.

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

Ha! A ſteady Villain to the laſt!

MASK-

MASKWELL.

Come, why do you dally with me thus?

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

Thy ſtubborn Temper ſhocks me, and you knew it would —— this is Cunning all, and not Courage; no, I know thee well: But thou ſhalt miſs thy Aim.

MASKWELL.

Ha! ha! ha!

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

Ha! Do you mock my Rage? Then this ſhall puniſh your fond, raſh Contempt! Again ſmile! [*Goes to ſtrike.*
And ſuch a Smile as ſpeaks in Ambiguity! Ten thouſand Meanings lurk in each Cor- of that various Face.
O! That they were written in thy Heart, that I, with this, might lay thee open to my Sight!
But then 'twill be too late to know—
Thou haſt, thou haſt found the only Way to turn my Rage; Too well thou know'ſt my jealous Soul cou'd never bear Uncertainty. Speak then, and tell me — Yet are you ſilent? Oh, I am wilder'd in all Paſſions! But thus my Anger melts. [*Weeps*] Here, take this Poniard, for my very Spirits faint, and I want Strength to hold it; thou haſt diſarm'd my Soul.

[*Gives the Dagger.*

Lord

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

Amazement ſhakes me——Where will this end?

MASKWELL.

So, 'tis well — let your wild Fury have a Vent; and when you have Temper, tell me.

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

Now, now, now I am calm, and can hear you.

MASKWELL. [*Aſide.*]

Thanks, my Invention; and now I have it for you. — Firſt tell me what urg'd you to this Violence? For your Paſſion broke in ſuch imperfect Terms, that yet I am to learn the Cauſe.

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

My Lord himſelf ſurpris'd me with the News you were to marry *Cynthia* — That you had own'd your Love to him, and his Indulgence would aſſiſt you to attain your Ends.

CYNTHIA.

How, my Lord!

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

Pray forbear all Reſentments for a While, and let us hear the reſt.

MASKWELL.

I grant you in Appearance all is true;

I ſeem'd conſenting to my Lord; nay, tranſported with the Bleſſing—But could you think that I, who had been happy in your lov'd Embraces, could e'er be fond of an inferior Slavery?

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

Ha! O Poiſon to my Ears! What do I hear!

CYNTHIA.

Nay, good my Lord, forbear Reſentment, let us hear it out.

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

Yes, I will contain, tho' I cou'd burſt.

MASKWELL.

I that had wanton'd in the rich Circle of your World of Love, cou'd be confin'd within the puny Province of a Girl? No—Yet tho' I dote on each laſt Favor more than all the reſt; though I would give a Limb for every Look you cheaply throw away on any other Object of your Love; yet ſo far I prize your Pleaſures o'er my own, that all this ſeeming Plot that I have laid, has been to gratify your Taſte, and cheat the World, to prove a faithful Rogue to you.

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

If this were true—But how can it be?

MASK-

MASKWELL.

I have ſo contriv'd, that *Mellefont* will preſently, in the Chaplain's Habit, wait for *Cynthia* in your Dreſſing-Room: But I have put the Change upon her, that ſhe may be otherwhere employ'd — Do you procure her Night-Gown, and with your Hoods tied over your Face, meet him in her Stead; you may go privately by the back Stairs, and, unperceiv'd, there you may propoſe to reinſtate him in his Uncle's Favor, if he'll comply with your Deſires; his Caſe is deſperate, and I believe he'll yield to any Conditions.——If not, here, take this; you may employ it better, than in the Heart of one who is Nothing when not yours. [*Gives the Dagger.*

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

Thou canſt deceive every Body— Nay, thou haſt deceiv'd me; but 'tis as I would wiſh——Truſty Villain! I could worſhip thee.——

MASKWELL.

No more.—It wants but a few Minutes of the Time; and *Mellefont*'s Love will carry him there before his Hour.

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

I go, I fly, incomparable *Maſkwell!*

SCENE

SCENE XVIII.

MASKWELL, CYNTHIA, *Lord* TOUCHWOOD.

MASKWELL.

SO, this was a Pinch indeed; my Invention was upon the Rack, and made Diſcovery of her laſt Plot: I hope *Cynthia* and my Chaplain will be ready, I'll prepare for the Expedition.

SCENE XIX.

CYNTHIA, *Lord* TOUCHWOOD.

CYNTHIA.

NOW, my Lord?

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

Aſtoniſhment binds up my Rage! Villany upon Villany! Heav'ns, what a long Track of dark Deceit has this diſcover'd! I am confounded when I look back, and want a Clew to guide me through the various Mazes of unheard-of Treachery. My Wife! Damnation! my Hell!

CYN-

CYNTHIA.

My Lord, have Patience, and be ſenſible how great our Happineſs is, that this Diſcovery was not made too late.

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

I thank you; yet it may be ſtill too late, if we don't preſently prevent the Execution of their Plots; —— Ha! I'll do't. Where's *Mellefont*, my poor injur'd Nephew?——How ſhall I make him ample Satisfaction? —

CYNTHIA.

I dare anſwer for him.

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

I do him freſh Wrong to queſtion his Forgiveneſs; for I know him to be all Goodneſs,——Yet my Wife! Damn her, —She'll think to meet him in that Dreſſing-Room;—Was't not ſo? And *Maſkwell* will expect you in the Chaplain's Chamber.— For once, I'll add my Plot too. — Let us haſte to find out, and inform my Nephew; and do you, quickly as you can, bring all the Company into this Gallery. — I'll expoſe the Strumpet and the Villain.

SCENE

SCENE XX.

Lord FROTH, *Sir* PAUL PLYANT.

Lord FROTH.

BY Heav'ns I have ſlept an Age—— Sir *Paul*, what o'Clock is't? Paſt Eight, on my Conſcience: My Lady's is the moſt inviting Couch; and a Slumber there, is the prettieſt Amuſement! But where's all the Company?—

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

The Company, Gads-bud, I don't know, my Lord; but here's the ſtrangeſt Revolution, all turn'd topſy-turvy; as I hope for Providence.

Lord FROTH.

O Heav'ns, what's the Matter? Where's my Wife?

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

All turn'd topſy-turvy, as ſure as a Gun.

Lord FROTH.

How do you mean? My Wife?

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

The ſtrangeſt Poſture of Affairs!

Lord FROTH.

What, my Wife?

Sir

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

No, no, I mean the Family——Your Lady's Affairs may be in a very good Poſture; I ſaw her go into the Garden with Mr. *Briſk.*

Lord FROTH.

How? where? when? what to do?

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

I ſuppoſe they have been laying their Heads together.

Lord FROTH.

How?

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

Nay, only about Poetry, I ſuppoſe, my Lord; making Couplets.

Lord FROTH.

Couplets!

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

O, here they come.

SCENE XXI.

[*To them*] *Lady* FROTH, BRISK.

BRISK.

MY Lord, your humble Servant; Sir *Paul,* yours,——the fineſt Night!

Lady

Lady FROTH.

My Dear, Mr. *Briſk* and I have been Star-gazing, I don't know how long.

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

Does it not tire your Ladyſhip? are not you weary with looking up?

Lady FROTH.

Oh, no, I love it violently—My Dear, you're melancholy.

Lord FROTH.

No, my Dear; I'm but juſt awake.—

Lady FROTH.

Snuff ſome of my Spirit of Hartſhorn.

Lord FROTH.

I've ſome of my own, thank you, my Dear.

Lady FROTH.

Well, I ſwear, Mr. *Briſk*, you underſtood Aſtronomy like an old *Egyptian*.

BRISK.

Not comparably to your Ladyſhip; you are the very *Cynthia* of the Skies, and Queen of Stars.

Lady FROTH.

That's becauſe I have no Light, but what's by Reflection from you, who are the Sun.

BRISK.

Madam, you have eclips'd me quite, let me periſh,—I can't anſwer that.

Lady FROTH.

No Matter,—Hark ye, ſhall you and I make an Almanac together?

BRISK.

With all my Soul,—Your Ladyſhip has made me the Man in't already, I'm ſo full of the Wounds which you have given.

Lady FROTH.

O finely taken! I ſwear now you are even with me. O *Parnaſſus!* you have an infinite Deal of Wit.

Sir PAUL PLYANT.

So he has, Gads-bud, and ſo has your Ladyſhip.

SCENE XXII.

[*To them*] *Lady* PLYANT, CARELESS, CYNTHIA.

Lady PLYANT.

YOU tell me moſt ſurpriſing Things; bleſs me, who would ever truſt a Man? O my Heart aches for fear they ſhould be all deceitful alike.

CARE-

CARELESS.

You need not fear, Madam, you have Charms to fix Inconſtancy itſelf.

Lady PLYANT.

O dear, you make me bluſh.

Lord FROTH.

Come, my Dear, ſhall we take Leave of my Lord and Lady?

CYNTHIA.

They'll wait upon your Lordſhip preſently.

Lady FROTH.

Mr. *Briſk*, my Coach ſhall ſet you down.

[*A great Shriek from the Corner of the Stage.*

ALL.

What's the Matter?

SCENE XXIII.

[*To them*] *Lady* TOUCHWOOD *runs out affrighted, my Lord after her, like a Parſon.*

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

O I'm betray'd.—Save me, help me!

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

Now, what Evaſion, Strumpet?

Lady TOUCHWOOD.

Stand off, let me go.

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

Go, and thy own Infamy purſue thee. You ſtare as you were all amazed,——I don't wonder at it, — but too ſoon you'll know mine, and that Woman's Shame.

SCENE *The Laſt.*

Lord TOUCHWOOD, *Lord* FROTH, *Lady* FROTH, *Lady* PLYANT, *Sir* PAUL PLYANT, CYNTHIA, MELLEFONT, MASKWELL; MELLEFONT *diſguiſed in a Parſon's Habit and pulling in* MASKWELL.

MELLEFONT.

NAY, by Heav'n you ſhall be ſeen.—*Careleſs,* your Hand:—Do you hold down your Head? Yes, I am your Chaplain: Look in the Face of your injur'd Friend; thou Wonder of all Falſehood.

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

Are you ſilent, Monſter?

MELLEFONT.

Good Heav'ns! How I believ'd and lov'd this Man!—Take him hence, for he's a Diſeaſe to my Sight.

Lord

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

Secure that manifold Villain.

[*Servants ſeize him.*

CARELESS.

Miracle of Ingratitude!

BRISK.

This is all very ſurpriſing, let me periſh.

Lady FROTH.

You know I told you *Saturn* look'd a little more angry than uſual.

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

We'll think of Puniſhment at Leiſure; but let me haſten to do Juſtice, in rewarding Virtue and wrong'd Innocence.——Nephew, I hope I have your Pardon, and *Cynthia*'s.

MELLEFONT.

We are your Lordſhip's Creatures.

Lord TOUCHWOOD.

And be each other's Comfort;——Let me join your Hands.—Unwearied Nights, and wiſhing Days attend you both; mutual Love, laſting Health, and circling Joys, tread round each happy Year of your long Lives.

Let ſecret Villany from hence be warn'd;
Howe'er in private Miſchiefs are conceiv'd,
Torture and Shame attend their open Birth:

Like

Like Vipers in the Womb, baſe Treachery lies,
Still gnawing that, whence firſt it did ariſe;
No ſooner born, but the vile Parent dies.

[Exeunt Omnes.

EPILOGUE.

EPILOGUE.

Spoken by Mrs. MOUNTFORD.

COU'D Poets but foreſee how Plays would take,
Then they cou'd tell what Epilogues to make;
Whether to thank or blame their Audience moſt:
But that late Knowledge does much Hazard coſt;
'Till Dice are thrown, there's Nothing won, nor loſt.
So 'till the Thief has ſtol'n, he cannot know
Whether he ſhall eſcape the Law, or no.
But Poets run much greater Hazards far,
Than they who ſtand their Trials at the Bar;
The Law provides a Curb for it's own Fury,
And ſuffers Judges to direct the Jury.
But in this Court, what Diff'rence does appear!
For every one's both Judge and Jury here;
Nay, and what's worſe, an Executioner.
All have a Right and Title to ſome Part,
Each chooſing that in which he has moſt Art.

The

EPILOGUE.

The dreadful Men of Learning all confound,
Unleſs the Fable's good, and Moral ſound.
The Viſor-Maſks, that are in Pit and Gallery,
Approve, or Damn, the Repartee and Rallery.
The Lady Critics, who are better read,
Enquire if Characters are nicely bred:
If the ſoft Things are penn'd and ſpoke with Grace:
They judge of Action too, and Time, and Place;
In which we do not doubt but they're diſcerning,
For that's a Kind of Aſſignation Learning.
Beaus judge of Dreſs; the Witlings judge of Songs;
The Cuckoldom, of ancient Right, to Cits belongs.
Poor Poets thus the Favor are deny'd,
Even to make Exceptions, when they're try'd.
'Tis hard that they muſt ev'ry one admit:
Methinks I ſee ſome Faces in the Pit,
Which muſt of Conſequence be Foes to Wit.
You who can judge, to Sentence may proceed;
But tho' he cannot Write, let him be freed
At leaſt from their Contempt, who cannot Read.

The End of the FIRST Volume.

3 V. m.m.i

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